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BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON

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BY

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON

Translated from the Norwegian by

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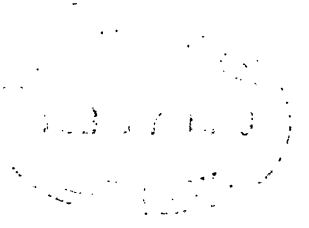

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THE HOMESTEAD AND THE RACE

THE coast line of the south of Norway is very irregular. This is the work of the mountains and rivers. The former end in hillocks and headlands, off which often lie islands; the latter have dug out valleys and end in fjords or smaller inlets.

In one of these inlets, known as "Kroken" (the nook), lies the homestead. The original name of the place was Krokskogen. In the documents of the Danish government officials this was transformed into Krogskoven; now it is Krogskogen. The owners originally called themselves Kroken; Anders and Hans Kroken were the regularly recurring names. In course of time they came to call themselves Krogh; the general in the Danish army subscribed himself *Von* Krogh. Now they are Krog, plain and simple.

The passengers on the small steamers which, on their way to and from the neighbouring town,

touch at the landing-place below the little chapel, never fail to remark on the beautifully sheltered, snug situation of Krogskogen.

The mountains rise high on the horizon, but here they have dwindled down. The farmlies between two long wooded ridges which project into the sea—its buildings so close to the right-hand ridge that to the steamer-passengers it seems as if a man might easily jump from their roofs on to the steep hill-side. The west wind cannot find its way in here. The place seems, after the manner of children playing at hide-and-seek, to have the right to cry: *Pax!* to it. And it is almost in a position to say the same to the north and east winds. Only a gale from the south can make its entrance, and that in humble fashion. Islands, one large and two small, detain and chasten it before they allow it to pass. The tall trees in front of the houses merely bow their topmost branches rhythmically; they abate none of their dignity.

In this sheltered bay is the best bathing-place of the whole neighbourhood. In summer the youth of the town used to come out here on the Saturday evenings and Sundays to disport themselves in the sandy shallows or to swim out to the large island and back. It was at the left side

of the bay, reckoning from Krogskogen, that this went on, the side where the river falls into the sea, where the landing-place lies, and, a little above it and nearer the ridge, the chapel, with the graves of the Krog family clustered round it. The distance from here to the houses on the right is considerable. Up there the noise made by the merry bathers was seldom heard. But Anders Krog often came down to watch them, when they had lighted fires on the beach or in the wood on the point. He doubtless came to keep an eye on the fires; but nothing was ever said of this. Anders was known as the politest man, "the most thorough gentleman," in the town. His large, peculiarly bright eyes beamed a gentle welcome into the faces of all; the few words which fell from him expressed only kindly interest. He soon passed on, to climb the ridge and take his usual slow walk round. As long as his tall, slightly stooping form was visible in the wood above, there was silence. But what a good time the bathers had here! They were for the most part working men from the town, members of gymnastic societies or choral unions, troops of boys. Their gathering-place was beside the landing-stage and the chapel. There they undressed. The main road which follows the coast passes the spot; but

it was little frequented in summer; people came to the place by boat or in the small steamers. So long as the bathers kept a watchman on the ridge, they were certain of not being surprised.

Up at the house it was quiet, always quiet. The front of the main building does not even face the bay; it looks on the fields. The building is of two high storeys, with the roof flattened over the gables—a long, broad house.

The foundation wall rises very high in front; a flight of easy steps leads up to the door. The whole building is painted white, except the foundation wall and the windows, which are black. The outhouses lie nearer the ridge; they cannot be seen from the steamer. At one side of the main building an orchard slopes towards the sea; at the other is a large flower and kitchen garden.

The level land, a long, narrow strip, lies between the ridges. It is carefully and skilfully cultivated. The big Dutch cows thrive here.

The history of the property and that of its owners was predetermined by the woods. These were large and valuable, and fortunately came in good time under careful Dutch management. This happened in the days when the small Dutch merchant-vessels traded directly with the owners

of the woods in Norway. The Dutchmen were supplied with timber, and in turn supplied the Norwegians with their civilisation and its products. Krogskogen was specially fortunate, for, some three hundred years ago, the owner of one of the "koffs" which lay loading in the bay, fell in love with the peasant's fair-haired daughter. He ended by buying the whole place. A beautifully painted portrait of him and her still hangs in the best room of the house, in the corner nearest the bay. It represents a tall, thin man, with peculiarly bright eyes. He is dark-haired, and has a slight stoop of the neck. The race must have been a vigorous one, for the Krogs are like this to-day.

The first Dutch owner was not called Krog, nor did he live at Krogskogen; but the son who inherited the place was baptised Anders Krog, after his mother's father; he called his son Hans, after his own father; and since then these two names have alternated. If there were several sons, one was always named Klas and another Jürges, which names in the course of time became Klaus and Jörgen. The family continued to intermarry with its Dutch kinsfolk, so that the race was as much Dutch as Norwegian; for long all the domestic arrange-

ments at Krogskogen were Dutch. In a manner, the nationalities did not seem really to mix. The reason of this probably was that the Dutch element was not pure Dutch—if it had been, it would have intermingled more easily with the Norwegian; it was a mixture of Dutch and Spanish. The black hair, the bright eyes, the lean body, were inherited by the men from generation to generation; the women inherited the fairness and the strong build; in them Norwegian blood flowed along with Dutch. Rarely indeed did the one sex make over any of its family characteristics to the other; occasionally fair and dark hair met in red, and once in a way the bright eyes would make their appearance in a woman's face.

It was a peculiarity of the race that in all its families more daughters than sons were born. The Krogs were fine-looking men and women, and, as a rule, were well off; consequently, the family made good connections and held a good position. They had the character of being clannish and able to hold their own.

One quality which marked them all was that of prudent moderation. In Norway a fortune rarely descends to the third generation. If it is not squandered in the second, it is certain to be in

the third. Not so in this case. To the main branch of the Krog family the woods were now the same source of wealth that they had been three hundred years before.

A desire which was transmitted from generation to generation was the desire to travel. In the book-cases at Krogskogen books of travel predominated, and additions were constantly made to their number. Even as children the Krogs travelled. They planned tours with the help of books, pictures, and maps. They sat at the table and played at travelling. They voyaged from one town built of coloured card-board houses to another of the same description. They navigated cardboard ships, loaded with beans, coffee, salt, and wooden pegs. In the bay they rowed and sailed and swam from the pier to the island. One day it was from Europe to America, another, from Japan to Ceylon. Or they crossed the ridge, that is the Andes, to the most wonderful Indian villages.

No sooner were they grown up than they insisted on seeing something of the world. They generally began with a voyage to Holland and a visit to their kinsfolk there. Some two hundred years ago a youth of the family, after a very short stay in Holland, went off in a Dutch East Indiaman. He, however, returned to Amsterdam,

resolved to become an architect and engineer—the professions were at that time combined. He made himself a name, and in course of time was called to Copenhagen to teach. He entered the military service and rose to the rank of general in the engineer corps. At the time of his retirement his earnings, added to his patrimony, constituted a considerable fortune. He settled at Krogskogen, which he bought after the death of a childless brother. He called himself Hans *von* Krogh. It was he who erected the present house, which is of stone, a very unusual building material in a Norwegian forest district. The old engineer-architect wanted occupation and amusement. Though he was not married, he made the house large, "for those to come." He rebuilt the farm-steading; he drained and he planted; he sent to Holland for a gardener—old Siemens, of whose strictness and angry insistence upon cleanliness and order stories are still told. For him the General put up hot-houses and built a cottage.

The General lived to be a very old man. After his day nothing special happened until the younger of two brothers emigrated to America and settled on the shores of Lake Michigan—at that time virgin soil. This was regarded as a great event. The man's name was Anders Krog.

He prospered over there, and people wondered that he did not marry. He invited one of his brother's sons to come out to him, promising to make him his heir. And thus it came about that Hans, the elder brother of the Anders Krog of our story, went to America.

At exactly the same time, however, arrived a young Norwegian girl, also a Krog; and with her the elderly uncle fell in love. He proposed to Hans to pay his journey home. But the young man felt that he would disgrace himself by returning. He stayed on and set up in business for himself—in the timber trade, which he understood. The undertaking prospered. By rights Hans should have gone home and taken possession of Krogskogen at the time of his father's death; but he refused to do so. The younger brother, Anders, who in the meantime had also taken to trade, and acquired the largest grocery business in the neighbouring town, was obliged to take over the property as well.

Young Anders Krog was not really a good business man. But his extraordinary conscientiousness and considerateness soon gained him the custom of the whole town. Another man in his place might have made a fortune; he did not. When he entered on possession of Krogskogen he had not yet paid up the price of his business in

town, and in taking over the property he incurred a still larger debt. For both he had been made to pay well. Travel he must, but he had to content himself with going off for a month each year—one year to England, another to France, and so on. His greatest desire was a visit to America, but on this he dared not venture yet. He contented himself with reading of the new wonderland. Reading was his chief pleasure; next to it came gardening, in which he possessed more skill than most trained gardeners.

This quiet man with the bright eyes was shyer than a girl of fourteen. Every week-day morning he chose, if possible, a seat by himself on the little steamer which took him to town as long as the bay was not frozen over. In going on shore he showed extreme consideration for others; then he hurried off, bowing respectfully to his acquaintances, to his house on the market-place, where he was to be found until evening, when he returned as he had come. At times he cycled. In winter he drove; and at this season he sometimes stayed over night in town, where he occupied two modest attic rooms in his own house.

The town knew of no other man possessing in such a degree all the qualities of a perfect husband. But his invincible modesty made all over-

tures impossible until . . . the right woman came. But then he was already over forty. The same fate befell him as had befallen his uncle and namesake at Lake Michigan; a young girl of his own family came and took possession of him. And she was this very uncle's only child.

He was working one Sunday morning, in his shirt-sleeves, in the kitchen and flower garden on the northern side of the house, when a young girl, wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat, laid her ungloved hands on the white fence and looked in between its round tops.

Anders, bending over a flower-bed, heard a playful: "Good morning!" and started up. Speechless and motionless he stood, with earth-soiled hands, his eyes drinking her in like a revelation.

She laughed and said: "Who am I?" Then his thinking power returned. "You are—you must be——"; he got no further, but smiled a welcome.

"Who am I?"

"Marit Krog from Michigan."

He had heard from his sister, who lived on the farther side of the left ridge, that Marit Krog was on her way to Norway. But he had no idea that she had arrived.

"And you are my father's nephew," said she with an English accent. "How like him you are! How very like!"

She stood looking at him for a moment. Then —"May I come in?"

"Of course you may—but first"——looking at his hands and shirt-sleeves, "first I must——."

"I can go in alone," said she frankly.

"Of course—please do! Go in by the front-door. I'll send the maid—" and he hurried towards the kitchen.

She ran round to the front of the house and up the steps. Turning an enormous key, an old work of art (as was also the iron-work on the door), she stepped into the hall or entrance room. Here there was plenty of light. Marit drew a little. She had learned to use her eyes. She saw at once that all these cupboards, large and small, were of excellent Dutch workmanship, and that the room was larger than it seemed; the furniture took up so much space. On her left an old-fashioned carved staircase led up to the second storey. The door straight in front of her led to the kitchen, she concluded, assisted by her sense of smell; and when the maid-servant issued from it she knew that she had guessed rightly. Through the open door she saw a floor

flagged with marble, walls covered with china tiles decorated in blue, and, upon the shelf which extended round the walls, brightly polished copper vessels of many different sizes—a Dutch kitchen.

In the hall she stood upon carpets thicker than any her feet had ever trodden. And quite as thick were those on the stairs, secured with the hugest of brass rods. "The people in this house walk on cushions," she thought to herself; and the idea immediately occurred to her that the house was an enormous bed. Afterwards she always called it "the bed." "Shall we go back to bed now?" she would say, laughing. On both sides of the hall she saw doors and pictured to herself the rooms within. To her left, that is, on the right side of the house, she imagined first a smaller room, and beyond it, nearest the sea, a large room, the whole breadth of the building. And she was correct. To her right she imagined the house divided lengthwise into two rooms. And in this also she was correct. Nor was it surprising that she should be, for her father's house on the shores of Lake Michigan was planned in imitation of this. Upstairs she pictured to herself a broad passage the whole length of the house, with moderate-sized rooms on both

sides of it. The carpets were extraordinarily thick down here, but she was certain that they were at least as thick upstairs, real cushion carpets. In this house there were no noises. Its inmates were quiet people.

The servant had opened the door to the left. Marit went into the great room and examined all its pictures and ornaments. It was terribly overcrowded, but all the things in themselves had been well chosen, many of them by connoisseurs—that she saw at once. Some of the paintings were, she felt certain, of great value. But what occupied her most was the thought that not until now had she understood her own old father, although she had lived with him all her life—alone with him; she had lost her mother early. Of just such a quantity of rare and precious things was he composed—in a somewhat confused fashion, which prevented his being appreciated. She felt as if he were standing by her, smiling his gentle, kindly smile, happy because he was understood.

And there he was, sure enough! Through the open door she saw him on the stair. Younger, yes! But that was of no consequence; the eyes were only the brighter and warmer for that. He came towards her with the same walk, the same

movement of the arms, the same slight stoop and circumspect carriage. And when he looked at her, and spoke to her, and bade her welcome in her father's gentle, subdued manner, she was conscious in him of the profound respect for the individual human being which, in her estimation, characterised her father beyond any one she had ever known. Her father's hair was thinner, his face was deeply lined, he had lost some of his teeth, his skin was shrivelled. The thought filled her eyes with tears. She looked up into the younger eyes, heard the fresher voice, felt the grasp of the warmer hand. She could not help it—she threw her arms round Anders Krog's neck, laid her head on his breast, and wept.

This settled the matter. There was no resisting this.

Soon afterwards they both got into the boat in which she had come. It was Marit who rowed round the point. Both for his own sake, and because of the bathers, who saw them, he had made some feeble attempts to take the oars. But from the moment when she threw her arms round his neck, he was powerless. He knew that he would henceforth do the will of this girl with the glory of red hair. He sat gazing at her freckled face and freckled hands, at her superb

figure, her fresh lips. At the edge of her collar he caught a glimpse of the purest of white skin; there was something in the eyes which corresponded exactly with this. He had not seen his fill when they landed. Nor could he get enough on the way up to his sister's farm—not enough of her soft voice, of her gait, of her dress, of the smile which disclosed her teeth, nor, above all else, of her frank, impetuous talk; all these things were alike bewildering.

Next morning he stayed at home. No sooner had the steamer with which he should have gone to town turned the point, than Marit's white boat came in sight. She had a maid-servant with her who was to keep watch, for to-day she too meant to bathe.

Afterwards she went up to the house. She had planned to stay there to dinner. In the afternoon they walked back together, across the ridge; the boat had been sent home.

Next day she went with him to town. The day after they were in town again, but this time she chose to drive, and made Anders' sister come with them. There was something new every day. The brother and sister simply lived for her, and she accepted the situation as if it were quite natural.

When she had been with them for about three weeks, a cablegram came to Krogskogen from brother Hans, telling that their uncle, Anders, had died suddenly; the news must be broken to Marit.

Never had Anders Krog taken a walk with heavier feet and heart than on the day when he crossed the hill to his sister's with this telegram in his pocket. As he came in sight of the home-like yellow house and steading amongst the trees on the plain below, he heard the dinner-bell ring out cheerily into the bright sunshine. The spread table was waiting. He sat down; he felt as if he could go no farther. Was he not on his way to kill the glad day?

When at length he reached the house, he went in by the kitchen door, along with some labourers who had come from a distance for their dinner. In the kitchen he found his sister, who took him into a back room. She was as much shocked and grieved as he; but she was of a more courageous nature; and she undertook to break the news to Marit, who had not come in yet, but was expected every moment.

Anders Krog in his back room ere long heard a scream which he never forgot. He sprang to his feet with the agony of it, but could not bring

himself to leave the room; the sound of bitter sobbing in the next held him fast. It grew louder and louder, interrupted by short cries. The same impetuous strength in her grief as in her joy! It set him pacing the room wildly until his sister opened the door.

"She wants to see you."

Then he was obliged to go in. Exerting all the strength of his will, he entered. Marit was lying on the sofa, but the moment she saw him she sat up and stretched out her arms.

"Come, come! *You* are my father now!"

He crossed the room quickly and bent over her; she put her arm round his neck and drew him down; he was obliged to kneel.

"You must never leave me again! Never, never!"

"Never!" he answered solemnly. She pressed him closer to her; her breast throbbed against his; her head lay against his—wet, burning.

"You must never leave me!"

"Never!" he said once more with all his heart, and folded her in his arms.

She lay down again as if comforted, took hold of his hand, and became quieter. Every time the sobbing began afresh he bent over her with caressing words, and soothed her.

He dared not go home; he stayed there all night. Marit could not sleep, and he had to sit beside her.

By the following day she had made up her mind what was to be done. She must go to America, and he must accompany her. This prompt decision rather disconcerted him. But neither he nor his sister dared oppose her. The sister, however, managed to give another direction to the girl's thoughts. She said: "You ought to be married to each other first." Marit looked at her and replied: "Yes, you are right. Of course we must be." And this thought began to occupy her mind so much that her grief became less acute. Anders had not been asked; but there was no necessity that he should be.

Then came the first letter from Hans. After telling about his uncle's funeral—how he had made all the arrangements, and what they were—he offered to take over his uncle's business and property.

Anders placed unlimited confidence in his brother; the offer was accepted; hence the journey was given up as needless. As soon as the necessary investigations and valuations had been made, Hans named his figure, and asked his brother if he would not invest this sum in the business. The bank deposits and other securities

were sent over at once. These alone produced a sum sufficient not only to pay Anders' debts, but also to allow Marit to make all the improvements at Krogskogen which she fancied. Anders wished her to keep the whole fortune in her own hands, but she ridiculed the idea. So he went into partnership with his brother, and was thenceforth, according to Norwegian ideas, a very wealthy man.

Some months after their marriage a change came over Marit. She gave way to strange impulses, seemed unable to distinguish clearly between dream and reality, and was possessed by a desire to make changes in everything that was under her care, both at home and in their house in town. The people who rented part of the latter had to move. She wished to have the house to herself.

Much of her husband's time was occupied in carrying out her plans, more in watching over herself. His gratitude did not find much expression in words; it was to be read in his eyes, in his increased reverence of manner, and above all in his tender care. He was afraid of losing what had come to him so unexpectedly, or of something giving way. His humility led him to feel that his happiness was undeserved.

Marit clung to him closer than ever. Two

expressions she never tired of repeating: "You are my father—and more!" and: "You have the most beautiful eyes in the world; and they are mine." Gradually she gave up many of her wonted occupations. In place of them she took to reading aloud to him. From her childhood she had been accustomed to read to her father; this practice was to be begun again. She read American literature, chiefly poetry—read it in the chanting style in which English verse is recited, and carried conviction by her own sincerity. Her voice was soft; it took hold of the words gently, repeated them quietly, as if from memory.

Then came the time when they went every day together to the hot-house. The flowers there were the harbingers of what was growing within her; she wished to see them every day. "I wonder if they are talking about it," she said.

And one day, when winter had given the first sign of departure from the coast, when they two had gathered the first green leaves in the border beneath the sunny wall, she fell ill and knew that the great hour had come. Without excessive previous suffering, and with her hand in his, she bore a daughter. This had been her wish. But it was not her lot to bring up her child; for three days later she herself was dead.

THE NEW MARIT.

THE doctor long feared that Krog, too, would die—of pure over-exertion. During his long solitude he had been unaccustomed to give as much of himself, or to receive as much, as life with Marit demanded and gave. Not until she died did it become apparent how weak he was, how little power of resistance was left him. It took months to restore the feeble remnant so far that he could again bear to have people about him. They told him that the child had been taken to his sister's. They asked him if he would like to see it. He turned away almost angrily. The first thing that seriously occupied his thoughts when he grew stronger was the disposal of his business. About this he consulted with a relation, a cross-grained bachelor, generally known as "Uncle Klaus." Through him the business was sold; but not the house in which it was

carried on; this was to remain exactly as it was, in remembrance of Marit.

Anders Krog's first walk was down to the chapel and the grave; and this told upon him so terribly that he became ill again. As soon as he recovered, he announced that it was his intention to go abroad and to remain abroad. His sister came to him in alarm: "This cannot be true. You surely do not mean to leave us and your child?"

"Yes," answered he, bursting into tears; "I cannot bear to live in these rooms."

"But you will at least see the child before you go!"

"No! no! Anything rather than that!"

And he left without seeing her.

But it was, naturally, the child that drew him home again. When she was about three years old she was photographed, and that photograph was irresistible. Such a likeness to her mother, such childlike charm, he could not stay away from. From Constantinople, where he received it, he wrote: "It has taken me nearly three years to go through again the experiences of one. I cannot say that I am in complete possession of them all yet. Many more are certain to recur to me when I see the places again where we were together. But

the deeper life and thoughts of these three years have at least taught me no longer to dread these places. On the contrary, I am longing to see them."

The meeting with the new Marit was a joy. Not at once, for she naturally began by being afraid of the strange man with the large eyes. But this made the joy all the greater when she gradually, cautiously, approached him. And when she at last sat upon his knee with her two new dolls, a Turkish man and woman, and shoved them up against his nose to make him sneeze, because "auntie" had sneezed, he said, with tears in his eyes: "I have had only one meeting that was sweeter."

She came, with her nurse, to live with him. Their first walk together was to her mother's grave, on which he wished her to lay flowers. She did it, but was determined to take them away with her again. All their efforts were in vain. The nurse at last picked others for her; but these she would not have; she wanted her own. They were obliged to let her take them and to make her lay the new ones on the grave. Anders thought: This is not like her mother.

The attempt was repeated. Mother's grave was to have fresh flowers every day, and Marit was

to lay them there. Anders divided the flowers into two bunches; he carried the one and she the other. She was to leave hers and have his to take home again. But this plan succeeded no better; indeed, worse; for when they were ready to leave the churchyard, she insisted that he, too, should take his flowers back with him. He was obliged to give in to her. Next day he tried something different. She carried flowers to her mother's grave, and he gave her sweets to induce her to let them lie there. Yes, she would give up the flowers in exchange for the sweets, which she put into her mouth. But when they were ready to go, she was determined to have the flowers too. He was quite cast down.

It then occurred to him to tell her that Mother was cold; Marit must cover her up. She thereupon proposed that Mother should come home to her own bed. Her father had told her that the empty bed beside his was Mother's; now she constantly asked if Mother were not coming soon. She could not come, he said; she must lie out there in the cold. This produced the desired effect. Marit herself spread the flowers over the grave and let them lie. On the way home she repeated several times: "Mother is not cold now."

Anders wondered what she understood by

"Mother." He wished her to be able to recognise her mother's portraits, but before showing her them, exercised her eye with pictures of animals and things. From these he proceeded to photographs of his sister, of himself, and of others whom she knew. When she was quite familiar with them, he produced the earliest photograph of her mother. There was no difficulty; she was shown several, and quickly learned to distinguish them from all others. In the afternoon, when she had been laid down to sleep, she asked to have "Mother" in her arms. Anders did not understand immediately, and she became impatient. Then he brought the first photograph of her mother. She took it at once, clasped it in her arms, and fell asleep. Not until she was four years old, and saw a mother in the kitchen tending her sick child, was he sure that she understood what a mother is; for then she said: "Why doesn't my mother come and undress me and dress me?"

In the end father and daughter became fast friends. But the greatest pleasure of all came when she was old enough for him to tell her about Mother. About Mother, who had come across the sea to Father, bringing little Marit with her. The walks which he had taken with Mother, the two took together—every one of them.

He rowed her as Mother had rowed him; they went to town together as Mother and Father had done. There she sat in the chairs which Mother had bought and sat in. At table she sat in Mother's place; in conservatory and garden among the flowers she was Mother, and helped as Mother had done.

What a clever, beautiful child she was! She had her mother's red hair and brilliantly white skin, her large eyes, and the same delicate, long line of eyebrow. Possibly she would also have the same aquiline nose. The hands with the long fingers were not her mother's, nor was the figure. That very slight forward bend at the joining of head and neck was like her father's. She had not her mother's prettily squared shoulders; Marit's sloped, and the arms descended from them in a more even line. Anders could not resist going up every evening to look at her when she was being undressed. The mixture of the masculine and feminine Krog types, which had hitherto been so uncommon, but which her mother had to a certain extent represented, was complete in her. She grew tall, her eyes large, her head shapely. Her father could not get her to associate with other children; it bored her. They did not transport themselves quickly enough into her imaginary world, which was certainly a

curious one. The fields were a circus—her father had told her about Buffalo Bill's. The Indians galloped across the plain; she herself, on a white horse, leading. The ridges were boxes, and they were full of people. This the other children could not see. Nor could they understand the travel-game on the table, which her father had taught her to play.

When she was nearly seven, she compelled her father, who was a good cyclist, to buy her a bicycle and teach her to ride it. But this was the drop which caused the cup to overflow. He decided to call in help.

In Paris he had made the acquaintance of a distant relation, Mrs. Dawes by name. This lady had married in England, but after the death of her only child she left her husband, and supported herself by keeping a boarding-house in Paris. In this boarding-house Krog had admired her extremely. He had seldom met a cleverer woman. Now he asked her if she would come and keep his house and educate his child. She promptly telegraphed "Yes," and within a month had sold her business, travelled to Norway, and entered upon all her duties. A disease of the hip-joint from which she had long suffered had become worse, so that she had difficulty in walking. But from the

wheeled arm-chair which she brought with her, and which her stout person completely filled, she managed the whole household, including Anders himself. He was quite alarmed by her cleverness. She seldom left her chair, and yet she knew of everything that happened. Walls did not conceal from her eyes; distance did not exist for her. Much of this power of hers was explained by the acuteness of her senses, by her cleverness in interpreting words and signs, reading looks and expressions and drawing inferences from them, and by her skill in the art of questioning. But there was something that defied explanation. When danger threatened any one she loved, she was aware of it—sitting in her chair. With a loud exclamation—always in English on such occasions—she sprang up, and actually ran. This happened, for instance, on the memorable day when Marit, on her bicycle, fell into the river and was fished out again by two men from the steamer; for it was close to the landing-place that the accident occurred; she was on her way there. On the way home she and Mrs. Dawes met—the one dripping with sea-water and screaming, the other dripping with perspiration and screaming.

Mrs. Dawes went the round of the house every

day—outside, if necessary, as well as inside—but she seldom went farther. On this round she saw everything—including what was about to happen, the servants declared.

There was a suggestion of floating about her. She sat floating in paper. She carried on, at least according to Anders Krog, a constant correspondence with every one who had ever lived in her house. It was carried on in all languages and upon all subjects; a considerable part of her time was spent in introducing what she read—and she read far into the night—into her letters. She moved her chair to the table on which lay her desk; then she turned away from the table to read. Fastened to the arm of the chair was a reading-desk, on which she laid the book; she seldom held it in her hand. Memoirs were her favourite reading; gossip from them she at once transferred to her letters. Next came art magazines and books of travel. She had a little money of her own, and bought what she wanted.

Along with all this she taught the child. The two sat at the big table in the drawing-room, "Aunt Eva" in her chair of state, the little girl opposite her. But whenever it was necessary, Marit had to come round and stand beside Aunt

Eva's desk. The hours of instruction passed so pleasantly that the little one often forgot that she was at lessons. Her father, whose library opened out of the drawing-room, often forgot it too, when he came in and listened to the conversations or to what Mrs. Dawes was telling.

Lessons might be easy, but something else was difficult and led to conflict. Mrs. Dawes wished to bring about a general alteration in the child's habits, and here she had the father against her. But he was, of course, worsted, and that before he understood what she was about. Marit had to learn to obey; she had to learn the meaning of punctuality, of order, of politeness, of tact. She had to practise every day, to hold herself straight at table, to wash her hands an unlimited number of times, always to tell where she was going—and all this against her own will, and really against her father's, too.

Mrs. Dawes had one sure base from which to operate. This was the child's unbounded faith in her mother's perfection. She convinced Marit that her mother had never gone to bed later than eight o'clock. Before getting into bed, too, Mother had always arranged her clothes upon a chair and set her shoes outside the door.

From what Mother had done, and done to

perfection, Mrs. Dawes went on to what Mother would have done if she had been in Marit's place, and, also, to what she would not have done if she had been Marit. This proved harder. When Mrs. Dawes, for instance, assured her that her mother had never ridden out of sight on her bicycle, Marit asked: "How do you know that?" "I know it because I know that your father and mother were never away from each other. "That is true, Marit," said her father, glad to be able for once to confirm one of Mrs. Dawes's assertions; most of them were not true.

The farther the work of education progressed, the more interested in it did Mrs. Dawes become, and the stronger did her hold on the child grow. She set herself the task of eradicating Marit's dream-life, an inheritance from her mother, which flourished exuberantly as long as her father encouraged it and took pleasure in it.

One spring Marit rushed in and told her father that in a hollow in the old tree between Mother's and Grandmother's graves there was a little nest, and in the nest were tiny, tiny little eggs. "It's a message from Mother, isn't it?" He nodded, and went with her to look at it. But when they came near, the bird flew out piping lamentably. "Mother says we are not to go

nearer?" questioned Marit. To this her father answered: "Yes." "It would be the same as disturbing Mother if we did?" continued she. He nodded.—They walked back to the house, perfectly happy, talking of Mother all the way. When Marit told Mrs. Dawes about this afterwards, Mrs. Dawes said to her: "Your father answers 'Yes' to such questions because he does not want to grieve you, child. If your Mother could send you a message, she would come herself." There was no end to the revolution which those few cruel words wrought. They altered even the relation between the child and her father.

The lessons went on steadily, and so did the training, until Marit was nearly thirteen—tall, very thin, large-eyed, with luxuriant red hair and a pure white skin guiltless of freckles, which was Mrs. Dawes's pride.

About this time Krog came in one day from the library to stop the lessons. This had not happened during all the years they had gone on. Marit was allowed to go. Mrs. Dawes accompanied Anders into the library.

"Be kind enough to read this letter."

She read, and learned what she had had no idea of—that the man who was standing before her, watching her face whilst she read, was a

millionaire—and that not in kroner, but in dollars. Since receiving the bank deposits and shares at the time of his uncle's death, he had drawn nothing from America—and this was the result.

"I congratulate you," said Mrs. Dawes, and seized his right hand in both of hers. Her eyes filled with tears: "And I understand you, dear Mr. Krog; it is your wish that we should travel now."

He looked at her, a glad smile in his bright eyes. "Have you any objection, Mrs. Dawes?"

"Not if we take servants with us. You know how lame I am."

"Servants you shall have, and we shall keep a carriage wherever we are. Lessons can go on, can't they?"

"Of course they can. Better than ever!" She beamed and wept. She said to herself that she had never felt so happy.

A fortnight later the three, with maid and manservant, had left Krogskogen.

THE SCEPTRE CHANGES HANDS

Two years and a half passed, during the course of which Krog was at home several times, unaccompanied by the others. Then it was determined that they should all spend a summer at Krogskogen. With this project in view the three were in a draper's shop in Vienna. Mrs. Dawes and Marit were to have new clothes, Marit especially being in need of them, as she had grown out of hers. It was the first week of May; summer dresses were to be chosen.

"We think, both your father and I, that you must have long dresses now. You are so tall."

Marit looked at her father, but the materials which lay spread out in front of him engaged his attention. Mrs. Dawes spoke for him.

"Your father says that when you are walking with him, gentlemen look at your legs."

Krog began to fidget. Even the lady behind

the counter felt that there was thunder in the air. She did not understand the language, but she saw the three faces. At last Anders heard Marit answering in a curious, but quite pleasant voice :

"Is it because Mother had long dresses when she was my age that I am to have them?"

Mrs. Dawes looked with dismay at Anders Krog; but he turned away.

"Aunt Eva," began Marit again; "of course you were with Mother then? at the time she got long dresses? Or was it Father?"

No more was said about long dresses. No more was said at all. They left the shop.

Nothing else happened. As if it had been a matter of course, next day, instead of coming to lessons, she drove with her father, first to arrange about the dresses, and then to the picture-galleries. They went sight-seeing every day until they left. There were no more lessons. In the evenings the three went, as if nothing had occurred, to concert, opera, or theatre. They wished to make good use of the remaining time.

At the beginning of June they were in Copenhagen. There a letter awaited them from "Uncle Klaus." Jörgen Thiis, his adopted son, had received his commission as lieutenant; Klaus meant to give a summer ball at his country-house,

but was waiting until they came home. When were they coming?

Marit was delighted at the prospect. She remembered handsome, tall Jörgen. He was a son of the Amtmand*; his mother was Klaus Krog's sister.

A ball-dress had now to be thought out; but the deliberations were short, nothing being said on the subject until they were on their way to order it. The one really exciting question: Ought not this dress to be long? they did not discuss. When the decisive moment arrived, and the length of the skirt was to be taken, the dressmaker who was measuring said: "I suppose the young lady's dress is to be long?" Marit looked at Mrs. Dawes, who turned red. What was worse, the dressmaker herself blushed. Then she hastily took the length of the short dress which Marit was wearing.

The ball was given on the 20th of June, a sultry day, without sun. The guests were assembled in the garden in front of the large country-house, when the sailing-boat came in which brought Marit and her father; they were the last to arrive. Old Klaus—tall, thin, wearing remarkably wide white trousers—stalked down

* Chief magistrate of the district.

to receive her. Standing hatless, with shining bald head and perspiring face, he stopped her with a motion of his hand whilst he looked down at Anders in the boat.

"Are you not coming?"

"No, no! Thanks all the same!"

Off went the boat. Not till now did Klaus look at Marit, whom Mrs. Dawes in her long letters had described as the most beautiful girl she had ever seen. He stared, he bowed, and approached her, reeking of tobacco, his big, smiling, open mouth disclosing unclean teeth. He offered his arm. But Marit, who was wearing a long sleeveless cloak which reached to the ground, pretended not to see this. Klaus was offended, but escorted her up to the others, saying as they arrived: "Here I come with the queen of the ball." This displeased her, and every one else, so the beginning was unfortunate. Jörgen, whose place it was to do so, hastened forward to take her cloak and hat; but she bowed slightly and passed on. There was style in this! As soon as she was out of hearing, comment began. Her bearing in passing them, her face, carriage, gait, the dazzlingly white skin, the sparkling eyes, the arch above them, the shape of the nose —everything was perfect, and made a perfect

whole. It was all over with Jörgen Thiis. He himself was a tall, slender man of the Krog type, but with eyes peculiar to himself. At present these were fixed on the door through which Marit had disappeared. He was waiting on the steps.

And when she came out again and stepped forward to take his arm and be conducted down to the others, she was a sight to see—in a short dress of light sea-blue silky material, with transparent silk stockings of the same colour, and silvery shoes with antique buckles. The company were unanimous in admiration, and were still expressing it as they trooped in to take their places at the tables. Nor was the subject dropped there; Marit's beauty became the talk of the town. To think that these regular features and bright eyes, and that white, white skin should be framed in such a glory of red hair! And the whole was in perfect keeping with the tall figure, the slight forward inclination of the shoulders, and a bosom which, though not fully developed yet, nevertheless stood out distinct and free.

The arms, the wrists, the hips, the legs!—it became positively comical when a group of young men were heard maintaining with the utmost eagerness that the ankles were more superb than anything else. Such ankles had never been seen

—so slender and so beautifully shaped—no, never!

Jörgen Thiis forgot to speak; he even for a considerable time forgot to eat, though, as a rule, he liked nothing better. He followed Marit about like a sleep-walker. She was never to be seen without him behind her or at her side.

Her father and Mrs. Dawes had, on account of the ball, come in to the town house. They were awakened at dawn of day by loud talking and laughter outside, ending with cheers; the whole company had seen Marit home.

Next day the relations and friends of the Krog family came to call. The elder people who had been at the ball considered Marit to be the most beautiful creature they had ever seen. At nine o'clock in the evening old Klaus had rowed into town and trudged round for the express purpose of getting some of his friends to come out and see her.

In the afternoon Jörgen presented himself in uniform, with new gloves. He had taken the liberty of calling to ask how Miss Krog was. But nothing had as yet been heard of that young lady.

When she did make her appearance, her mind was not occupied with yesterday, but with something quite different. This Mrs. Dawes felt at

once. The queen of the ball told nothing about the ball. She contented herself with asking if they had been awakened. Then she went and had something to eat. When she came back, her father told her that Jörgen had called to ask how she was. Marit smiled.

"Do you not like Jörgen?" asked Mrs. Dawes.

"Yes."

"Why did you smile, then?"

"He ate so much."

"His father, the Amtmand, does the same," remarked Krog, laughing. "And he always picks out the daintiest morsels."

"Yes, exactly."

Mrs. Dawes sat waiting for what was to come next; for something was coming. Marit left the room; in a short time she appeared again with her hat on and a parasol in her hand.

"Are you going out?" asked Mrs. Dawes.

Marit was standing pulling on her gloves.

"I am going to order visiting-cards."

"Have you no cards?"

"Yes, but they are not suitable now."

"Why not?" said Mrs. Dawes, much surprised. "You thought them so pretty when we bought them, in Italy."

"Yes—but what I don't think suits me any longer is the name."

"The name?"

Both looked up.

"I feel exactly as if it were no longer mine."

"Marit does not suit you?" said Mrs. Dawes.

Her father added gently: "It was your mother's name."

Marit did not answer at once; she felt the dismay in her father's eyes.

"What do you wish to be called, then, child?" It was again Mrs. Dawes who spoke.

"Mary."

"Mary?"

"Yes. That suits better, it seems to me."

The silent astonishment of her companions evidently troubled her. She added:

"Besides, we are going to America now. There they say Mary."

"But you were baptised Marit," put in her father at last.

"What does that matter?"

"It stands in your certificate of baptism, child," added Mrs. Dawes; "it is your name."

"Yes, it is in the certificate, no doubt—but not in me."

The others stared.

"This grieves your father, child."

"Father is welcome to go on calling me Marit."

Mrs. Dawes looked at her sorrowfully, but said no more. Marit had finished putting on her gloves.

"In America I am called Mary. I know that. Here is a specimen card. It looks nice; doesn't it?"

She drew a very small card from her card-case. Mrs. Dawes looked at it, then handed it to Anders. Upon it was inscribed in minute Italian characters:

Mary Krog.

Anders looked at it, looked long; then laid it on the table, took up his newspaper, and sat as if he were reading.

"I am sorry, Father, that you take it in this way."

Anders Krog said once more, gently, without looking up from his newspaper: "Marit is your mother's name."

"I, too, am fond of Mother's name. But it does not suit me."

She quietly left the room. Mrs. Dawes, who was sitting at the window, watched her going

along the street. Anders Krog laid down the newspaper; he could not read. Mrs. Dawes made an attempt to comfort him. "There is something in what she says; Marit no longer suits her."

"Her mother's name," repeated Anders Krog; and the tears fell.

THREE YEARS LATER

THREE years later, in Paris, on a beautiful spring day after rain, Mary and her relation, Alice Clerc, drove down the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne towards the gilded entrance gate. The two had made each other's acquaintance in America, and had met again a year ago in Paris. Alice Clerc lived in Paris now with her father. Mr. Clerc had been the principal dealer in works of art in New York. His wife was a Norwegian lady of the Krog family. After her death he sold his enormous business. The daughter had been brought up in art surroundings, and her art training had been thorough. She had seen the picture-galleries and museums of all countries—had dragged her father as far as Japan. Their house in the Champs Elysées was full of works of art. And she had her own studio there; she modelled. Alice was no longer young; she

was a stout, strong person, good-natured and lively.

Anders Krog and his companions had this year come from Spain. The two friends were talking of a portrait of Mary which had been sent from Spain to Alice, and afterwards to Norway. Alice maintained that the artist had plainly intended to produce a resemblance to Donatello's St. Cecilia —in the position of the head, in the shape of the eye, in the line of the neck, and the half-open mouth. But, interesting as this experiment might be, it took away from the likeness. It was, for instance, a loss to the portrait that the eyes were not seen; they were cast down, as in Donatello's work. Mary laughed. It was on purpose to have this resemblance brought out that she had sat for it.

Alice now began to talk about a Norwegian engineer officer whom she had known since the days when she went to Norway in summer with her mother. He had seen Mary's portrait at the Clercs' house, and had fallen in love with it.

"Really?" answered Mary absently.

"He is not the ordinary man, I assure you, nor is it the ordinary falling in love."

"Indeed?"

"I am preparing you. You will of course meet at our house."

"Is that necessary?"

"Very. At least I shall be made to pay for it if you don't."

"Dear me! is he dangerous?"

Alice laughed: "I find him so, at any rate."

"O ho! that alters the situation."

"Now you are misunderstanding me. Wait till you see him."

"Is he so very good-looking?"

Alice laughed. "No, he is positively ugly. Just wait."

As they drove on, the Avenue became more crowded; it was one of the great days.

"What is his name?"

"Frans Röy."

"Röy? That is our lady doctor's name—Miss Röy."

"Yes, she is his sister, he often talks of her."

"She is a fine-looking woman."

Alice drew herself up. "You should see *him*. When I walk with him in the street, people turn round to take another look at him. He is a giant! But not of the kind that run to muscle and flesh. No, very tall, agile."

"A trained athlete, I suppose?"

"Magnificent! His strength is what he is proudest of and delights most in displaying."

"Is he stupid, then?"

"Stupid? Frans Röy?——" She leaned back again, and Mary asked no more.

They had been late in setting out. Endless rows of returning carriages passed them. The three broad driving-roads of the Avenue were crowded. The nearer they came to the iron gate where these three meet in one, the more compact did the rows become. The display of light, many-coloured spring costumes on this first day of sunshine after rain was a unique sight. Amongst the fresh foliage the carriages looked like baskets of flowers among green leaves—one behind the other, one alongside of the other, without beginning, without end.

At the iron gate they came close to the undulating crowd of pedestrians. No sooner were they inside than a disturbance communicated itself from right to left. The people on the right must see something invisible to the others. Some of them were screaming and pointing in the direction of the lakes; the carriages were ordered to drive either to the side or into the cross-roads; the agitation increased; it was soon universal. Gendarmes and park-keepers rushed hither and thither; the carriages were packed so closely together that none of them could move on. A

broad space in the centre was soon clear for a considerable distance. All gazed, all questioned . . . there it came! A pair of frantic horses with a heavy carriage behind them. On the box both coachman and groom were to be seen. There must have been a struggle, since there had been time to clear the way; or else the horses must have bolted a long way off. Up here, inside the gate, all the carriages had disappeared from the central passage. Alice's stood blocked nearest the gate, against the left footpath. They hear shouts behind them; probably the whole Avenue is being cleared. But no one looks that way, all gaze straight ahead, at the magnificent animals that are tearing frantically towards them. Driven by curiosity, the crowds on both sides swayed back and forwards. Terrified voices outside the gate cried: "Shut the gates!" A furious protest, a thousand-voiced jeer, answered them from within. In the carriages every one was standing; many had mounted the seats, Mary and Alice among the number. It seemed as if the horses' pace increased the nearer they came; both coachman and groom were tugging at the reins with might and main, but this only excited them the more. A man wearing a tall hat was leaning his whole body out of the carriage,

probably to discover where he was going to break his neck. Some dogs were following, with strenuous protest. Up here they allured others on to the road, but these did not venture far out. Two or three that did, knocked up against each other with such violence that one fell and was run over; the carriage bounded, the dog howled; his comrades stopped for a moment.

Now a man, disengaging himself from the crowd at the iron gate, ran into the middle of the road. People shouted to him; they waved with sticks and umbrellas; they threatened. Two gendarmes ventured out a few steps after him and gesticulated and shouted; a single park-keeper inside the gate did the same, but ran back terrified. Instead of attending to these shouts and threats, the man measured the horses with his eye, moved to the left, to the right, back again to the left. . . . evidently preparing to throw himself on them.

The moment the crowd comprehended this, it became silent, so silent that the birds could be heard singing in the trees. And heard, too, the dull, distant sound from the giant town, which never ceases, borne hither by the breeze. Its monotonous tone underlay the twitter of the birds. Strange it was, but the horses of the

carriages drawn up by the roadside stood as intent as the human beings; they did not stir a foot.

The frantic pair reach the man in the middle of the avenue. He turns with the speed of an arrow in the direction they are going, and runs along with them, flinging himself against the side of the horse next him. . . .

"It is he!" cried Alice, deathly pale, and gripping Mary so violently that they were both on the point of toppling over. Women's screams resounded wild and shrill, the deeper roars of the men following. He was now hanging on to the horse. Alice closed her eyes. Mary turned away. Was he running, or was he being dragged? Stop them he could not!

Again a few seconds of terrible silence; only the dogs and the horses' hoofs were heard. Then a short cry, then thousands, then jubilation, wild, endless jubilation—handkerchiefs waving, and hats and parasols. The crowd burst into the Avenue again from both sides like a flood. The space by the gate was filled in an instant. The frenzied animals stood trembling, in a lather of foam, close to Alice's carriage. Mary saw a grey-clad Englishman, an erect old man with a white beard and a tall hat; she saw a young lady hanging on his arm, and

she heard him say: "Well done, young man!" A roar of laughter followed. And not till now did she see him who had evoked it—still gripping the horse's nostrils, hatless, waistcoat torn, hand bleeding, his perspiring, excited face at this moment turned laughingly towards the Englishman. At exactly the same time the man caught sight of Alice, who was still standing on the seat of her carriage. He instantly deserted horses, carriage, Englishman, and forced his way through the crowd towards her.

"Dear people, get me out of this!" he said quickly, in the broadest of "Eastern" Norwegian. Before Alice had time to answer, or even to step down from the seat, and long before the groom could swing himself down from the box, he had opened the carriage door and was standing beside them. He handed first Alice and then her friend down from the seat. Then he said to the coachman in French:

"Drive me home as soon as you can move. You remember the address?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Capitaine," replied the coachman, touching his hat respectfully, with a look of admiration.

As Frans Röy turned to sit down, his face contracted, and he exclaimed, catching hold of his

foot: Oh!——the devil! that brute must have trodden on me. I never felt it till now."

As he spoke, he met Mary's large, astonished eyes; he had not looked at her before, not even when he was assisting her down from the seat. The change in his expression was so sudden and so extremely comical that both ladies burst out laughing. Frans raised his bleeding hand to his hat—and discovered that he had no hat. Then he laughed too.

The coachman had in the meantime manœuvred them a few yards forwards, and they were beginning to turn.

"I don't suppose I need tell you who she is?" laughed Alice.

"No," answered Röy, looking so hard at Mary that she blushed.

"Good heavens! Think of your daring to do that!" It was Alice who spoke.

"Oh! It's not so dangerous as it looks," he replied, without taking his eyes off Mary. "There's a trick in it. I've done it twice before." He was speaking to Mary alone. "I saw at once that only one horse had lost its head; the other was being dragged along. So I went for the mad one. —Goodness! what a sight I am!" He had not discovered till now that his waistcoat was in rags,

that his watch was gone, and that blood was dripping from his hand. Mary offered him her handkerchief. He looked at the delicate square of embroidery and then at her again: "No, Miss Krog; that would be like stitching birch-bark with silk."

Röy lived quite near the iron gate, to the right, so they arrived in a few moments. Thanking them heartily, and without offering his bleeding hand, he jumped out. Whilst he limped across the pavement, erect, huge, and the carriage was turning, Alice whispered in English: "If one could only have a model like that, Mary!"

Mary looked at her in surprise: "Well—is it not possible?"

Alice looked back at Mary, still more surprised: "Nude, I mean."

Mary almost started from her seat, then bent forward and looked straight into Alice's face. Alice met her eyes with a teasing laugh.

Mary leaned back and gazed straight in front of her.

On account of the injury to his foot, Frans Röy had to keep quiet for some days. The first time he called on Alice, Mary, according to agreement, was sent for. But she felt so strangely agitated

that she dared not go. Next time curiosity, or whatever the feeling was, brought her. But she came late, and hardly had she looked him in the face again before she wished that she had not come. There was an intensity about him which the fine lady felt to be intrusive, almost insulting. Her whole being was like a surging sea; she followed him with her eyes and with her ears; her thoughts were in a whirl, and so was her blood. This must pass over soon, she thought. But it did not. Alice's entrancement—love, to call it by the right name—audible and visible in every word, every look, added to her confusion. Was he really so ugly? That broad, upright forehead, these small, sparkling eyes, the compressed lips and projecting chin, produced in conjunction an impression of unusual strength; but the face was made comical by there being no nose to speak of. Very comical, too, was most of his conversation. He was in such high spirits and so full of fun and fancies that the rattle never ceased. His manners were not overbearing; on the contrary, he was politeness itself, attentive, at times quite the gallant. What overpowered was his forcefulness. Force spoke in his voice and glanced from his eyes. But the body, too, played its part — the strong hand, the small,

foot, compact, the shoulders, the neck, the chest —these spoke too, they insisted, they demonstrated. One could not escape from them for a moment. And the talk never ceased.

Mary was unaccustomed to any style of conversation except that of international society—light talk of wind and weather, of the events of the day, of literature and art, of incidents of travel—the whole at arm's length. Here everything was personal and almost intimate. She felt that she herself acted upon Frans like wine. His intoxication increased; he let himself go more and more. This excited her too much; it gave her a feeling of insecurity. As soon as politeness allowed of it, she took leave, nervous, confused, as a matter of fact in wild retreat. She promised herself solemnly that she would never go back again.

Not until later in the day did she join her father and Mrs. Dawes. She did not say a word about her meeting with Frans Röy. Nor had she done so on the previous occasion. Mrs. Dawes told her to look at a visiting-card which was lying on the table.

"Jörgen Thiis? Is he here?"

"He has been here all winter. But he had only just heard of our arrival."

"He asked to be remembered to you," put in Anders, who was, as usual, sitting reading.

It was a rest even to think of Jörgen Thiis. Last winter he and she had seen a good deal of each other in Paris. Both at private houses and at official balls at the Elysées and the Hôtel de Ville he had been of their party. He was a squire to be proud of, good-looking, gentlemanly, courteous.

Her father mentioned that Jörgen was intending to exchange into the diplomatic service.

"Surely money is required for that?" said Mary.

"He is Uncle Klaus's heir," replied Mrs. Dawes.

"Are you certain of this?"

"No, not certain."

"And has not Uncle Klaus lost a good deal of money lately?"

Mrs. Dawes did not answer. Krog said:

"We have heard something to that effect."

"In that case will he be able to help him?"

No one replied.

"Then it does not seem to me that Jörgen's prospects are particularly good," concluded Mary.

Röy was in France on special Government business, which often took him away from Paris. He had to go just at this time, so Mary felt safe. But one morning when she made an early call on Alice —the two had arranged to go into town together— there he sat! He jumped up and came towards her,

his eyes beaming admiration and delight upon her. He seized her hand in both of his. She had never beheld such radiant happiness. She felt herself turn scarlet. Alice laughed, which made things worse. But Frans Röy's loquacity came to their assistance. It was excessive to-day even for him. He plunged at once into a description of a gigantic foundry from which he had just come, and drew them along with him. They saw the half-naked men standing with their hooks on the edge of the stream of boiling, bubbling, fiery-red metal; they felt the power of the machinery, and saw the human beings creeping among it like cautious ants in a giant forest. He tried, too, to explain this machinery to them in detail. And he made them understand perfectly; but time wore on, and the two friends had to go.

Alice was in the best of spirits during their drive. It was so evident that Frans had made a strong impression to-day.

On the following morning Mary went off on a motor excursion with some American friends. She was away for several days. And the first thing she did on her return was to call on Alice. There, sure enough, sat Frans Röy! Both he and Alice jumped up, delighted. Alice embraced and kissed her. "Runaway, runaway!" she exclaimed. It is not enough to say that Frans Röy's eyes sparkled; they fired a royal salute. From the

moment Mary shook hands with him, he talked incessantly. He was so foolishly in love that Alice began to feel alarmed. Fortunately he had to go soon, to keep a business appointment. Mary was left in a stormy swell; the sea would not go down. Alice saw this and tried to calm her by eager, anxious attempts to explain him. But this only further confused her; she left.

As she came downstairs to join her father and Mrs. Dawes in the afternoon—she had felt it necessary to take a rest—she heard piano-playing. She knew at once that it was Jörgen Thiis who was entertaining the old people. He was a first-rate musician, and he loved their piano. It was to go with them to Norway. She went straight up to him, and thanked him for being so attentive to her father and Aunt Eva; unfortunately they were left much alone. He replied that their appreciation of his music gratified him exceedingly, and that the piano was a great attraction, being a particularly fine instrument.

The conversation during and after dinner showed Mary how accustomed these three were to be together; they could do without her. She felt really grateful, and they had a pleasant evening. There was much talk of home, for which the old people were longing.

Jörgen was hardly gone before Mrs. Dawes said: "What a pleasant, well-bred man Jörgen is, child!"

Anders looked at Mary and smiled.

"At what are you smiling, Father?"

"Nothing"—his smile growing broader.

"You want to know my opinion of him?"

"Yes, what do you think of him?

Mrs. Dawes was all ear.

"Well . . ."

"You have not made up your mind?"

"Yes . . yes."

"Speak out, then."

"I do really like him."

"But there is a something?"

Now it was she who smiled. "I dont like the way his eyes seem to draw me in."

Her father laughed:

"To gloat over you like food. Eh?"

"Yes, exactly."

"He's a bon-viveur, you see—like his father."

"But, like his father, he has so many good qualities," put in Mrs. Dawes.

"He has," said Anders Krog seriously.

Mary said no more. She bade them good-night, and offered him her forehead to kiss.

A few days later Mary went to Alice's house at an early hour. Anders Krog had seen

some old Chinese porcelain which he thought of buying; but Alice's advice was indispensable. At this time of day and in the studio Mary could be certain of finding her alone—at least alone with her model.

She went straight in without speaking to the porter. Alice opened the door herself. She had on her studio-dress and her hand was dirty, so that she could not take Mary's.

"You are busy with a model," whispered Mary.

"I shall be presently," answered Alice with a curious smile. "The model is waiting in the next room. But come in."

When Mary passed beyond the curtain she saw the reason why the model was waiting in the next room. In the studio sat Frans Röy. Thus early in the day and rapt in thought! He did not even notice them entering. This was the first time Mary had seen him serious; and seriousness became the manly figure and the strong face much better than wanton hilarity.

"Do you not see who has come?" asked Alice.

He sprang up. . . .

The conversation that day was serious. Frans was in a dejected mood; it was easy for Mary to divine that they had been talking about her.

They all consequently felt a little awkward at

first, until Alice turned the conversation on a topic from that morning's newpapers. Two murders, instigated by jealousy—one of them of the most terrible description—had horrified them all, but especially Frans. He maintained that the idea of the marriage relation peculiar to the Romance nations is still that of the age when the wife was the husband's property, and when, in consequence of this, unfaithfulness was punished by death. Christianity, he allowed, in course of time, also made the husband the wife's property, especially in Roman Catholic countries. In these the spouses rivalled each other in killing—the wife the husband, the husband the wife. This assertion gave rise to an argument. Mary agreed that neither of the contracting parties owned the other. After marriage, as before, they were free individuals, with a right to dispose of themselves. Love alone decided. If love ceased, because development made of one or other a different being from what he or she was at the time of marriage; or if one of them met another human being who took possession of his or her soul and thoughts and changed the whole tenor of life, then the deserted spouse must submit—neither condemn nor kill. But Frans Röy and she disagreed when they discussed what ought to separate husband and wife—and

still more when they came to what ought to keep them together. She was much more exacting than he. He suggested jokingly that her theory was: Married people have full liberty to separate, but this liberty they must not use. She declared his to be: Married people ought as a rule to separate; if they have no real reason, they can borrow one.

This conversation meant more to them than the words implied. It impressed him as a new beauty in her that she was queenly. This cast a new glory over all the rest.

The queenliness did not consist in desire to rule. It was purely self-defence; but the loftiest. Her whole nature was concentrated in it, luminously. "Touch me not!" said eyes, voice, bearing. There was preparedness, undoubtedly, if need were, for the martyr's crown. She became much greater—but also more helpless. Such as she look too high and fall the first step they take. And great is generally their fall.

Frans gazed at her; he forgot to answer, forgot what she had said. He seemed to hear a voice calling: "Protect her!" Chivalry entered into his love, and issued its high behests.

Mary saw him withdraw himself from their conversation; but this did not stop her; the

subject was too absorbing. When he came back to it again he heard her divulging her inmost thoughts, undoubtedly with no idea that she was doing so. She told what she had thought ever since she could think on such subjects at all. It came as naturally to her to do so as to lift her dress where the road was dirty, or to swim when she could no longer keep her footing.—Individuality must be preserved, must grow, be neither curbed nor soiled. With this she began, with this she ended. But she was all the time conscious of a curious attraction towards Frans which led her to speak out. It was so long since they had been together. She did not know that the person who can draw forth our thoughts is, in the nature of things, a person who has power over us. She only felt that she was obliged to speak—and to keep control over herself. A sweet feeling, which she experienced for the first time.

The conversation changed into talk which became ever more intimate, and lost itself at last in a silence of looks and long-drawn breaths. Alice had gone to her model. They became confused when they discovered that they were alone. They stopped talking and looked away from each other.

After short visits to one and another of the many works of art in the studio, their attention concentrated itself on a faun without arms. It stood laughing at them. They talked about this fragment of antique sculpture merely that there might not be silence. Where had it been found? To what age did it belong? It must surely have been an animal. They spoke in subdued tones, with caressing voices, and unsteady eyes. Nor were their feet steadier. They felt themselves lighter than before, as if they were in higher air. And it seemed to them as if their thoughts lay bare, and they themselves were transparent.

Presently Alice joined them again. She looked at them with eyes that awoke both. "Have you done with marriage now?" she asked. It was about marriage they had been talking when she left them.

Mary remembered that she had an errand, and that her carriage was waiting. Frans Röy also remembered what he ought to be doing. They went off together, across the court and through the outer gate, to her carriage. But they could not strike the same tone as before, so they did not speak.

Hat in hand, Frans opened the carriage-door. Mary got in without raising her eyes. When,

after seating herself, she turned to bow, the strongest eyes she had ever looked into were waiting for her—full of passion and reverence.

Two hours later Frans was with Alice again. He could not remain longer alone with his heaven-storming hopes.

Where had he been in the interval? In town, buying a cast of Donatello's St. Cecilia. He had been obliged to compare. But Alice of course knew, he said, how wretchedly inferior Donatello's Cecilia was.

Alice began to be seriously alarmed. "My dear friend, you will spoil everything for yourself. It is in your nature."

He answered proudly: "Never yet have I seriously set myself an aim which I have not accomplished."

"I quite believe that. You can work, you can overcome difficulties, and you can also wait."

"I can."

"But you cannot suppress yourself; you cannot allow her to come to you."

Frans was hurt. "What do you mean, Alice?"

"I want to remind you, dear friend, that you don't know Mary; you don't know the world she lives in. You are a bear from the backwoods."

"It may be that I am a bear. I don't deny

that. But what if she should have become fond of a bear? One is not easily mistaken in such matters."

He would not allow his high hopes to be cast down. He came beseechingly towards her—even tried to embrace her; he was given to hugging.

"Come now, Frans; behave yourself. And remember, this is the second time you have disturbed me."

"You shall be disturbed. You shall not go on modelling your prisoner in there. Dear Alice, my own friend—you shall model my happiness."

"What more can I do for you than I have done?"

"You can procure me admission to the house."

"That is not such an easy matter."

"Bah! You can manage it quite well. You must! you must!"

He talked, coaxed, caressed, until she gave in and promised.

Whatever the reason, her attempt was a failure.

"If I asked my father to receive a young man who has not been introduced to him, he would misunderstand me," said Mary. Alice admitted this at once. She was angry with herself for not having thought of it. Instead of consulting with

Mary as to whether the thing might not be managed in another way, she gave up the project altogether. She was still annoyed when she communicated the result to Frans Röy; she had the feeling, she said, that Mary objected to the interference of any third person. She impressed on him again that he must be careful. Frans was miserable. Alice made no attempt to comfort him.

He came back next day. "I cannot give it up," said he. "And I cannot think of anything else."

So long did he sit there, so often did he repeat exactly the same thing in different words, and so unhappy was he, that good-natured Alice became sorry for him.

"Listen!" she said. "I'll invite you and the Krogs here together. Then perhaps the invitation to their house will come of itself."

He jumped up. "That is a splendid idea! Please do, dear Alice!"

"I can't do it immediately. Mr. Krog is ill. We must wait."

He stood looking at her, much disappointed. "But can you not arrange a meeting between us two again?"

"Yes, that I might do."

"Do it then—as soon as possible! dear, dear Alice—as soon as possible!"

This time Alice was successful. Mary was quite ready to meet him again.

They met at Alice's house, to drive together to the exhibition in the Champs Elysées.

To stand together before works of art is the real conversation without words. The few words that are spoken awake hundreds. But these remain unspoken. The one friend feels through the other, or at least they both believe that they do so. They meet in one picture, to separate in another. An hour thus spent teaches them more of each other than weeks of ordinary intercourse. Alice led the two from picture to picture, but was absorbed in her own thoughts—the more completely the farther they went. She saw as an artist sees. The others, who began with the pictures, gradually passed on to discovery of each other through these. With them it was soon a play of undertones, rapid glances, short ejaculations, pointing fingers. But those who feel their way to each other by secret paths enjoy the process exceedingly, and generally allow it to be perceived that they do so. They play a game like that of a pair of sea-birds that dive and come up again far away from each other—to find their way back to each other.

The happiness of the moment was increased by the number of eyes which were turned on them.

Downstairs amongst the statuary, Alice led them straight to the centre room. She stopped in front of an empty pedestal and turned to the official in charge. "Is the acrobat not ready yet?" "No, Mademoiselle," he answered; "unfortunately not."

"There must have been another accident?"

"I do not know, Mademoiselle."

Alice explained to Mary that the statue of an acrobat had been broken in the process of setting it up.

"An acrobat?" called Frans Röy. He was standing a short way off; now he hastened up to them. "An acrobat? Did I hear you speaking about an acrobat?"

"Yes," said they, and laughed.

"Is that anything to laugh at?" said he. "I have a cousin who is an acrobat."

The ladies laughed more heartily. Frans was greatly astonished.

"I assure you he is one of the best fellows I know. And marvellously clever. The talent runs in our family. As a boy I was two whole summers in the circus with him."

The others laughed.

"What the deuce can you be laughing at? I never had a better time in my life than in the circus."

The two ladies, unable to control their merriment, hurried towards the door. Röy was obliged to follow, but was offended.

"I have not the faintest idea what is amusing you," he said, when they were all seated in the carriage. Nevertheless he laughed himself.

The little misunderstanding resulted in all three being in the best of hūmours when they stopped in front of Mary's house. Alice and Frans Röy drove on without her. Frans turned blissfully to Alice and asked if he had not been a good boy to-day? if he had not kept himself well in hand? if his "affair" were not progressing splendidly? He did not wait for her answer; he laughed and chattered; and he was determined to go in with her. But this Alice had no intention of allowing. Then he demanded, as his reward for not persisting, that she should take them both for a drive in the Bois de Boulogne, in the direction of La Bagatelle. It was to be in the morning, about nine o'clock; then the scent of the trees would be strongest, the song of the birds fullest; and then they would still have the place to themselves. This she promised.

On the following Friday she called for Mary

before nine in the morning, and they drove on to pick up Frans Röy.

From a long way off Alice saw him marching up and down on the pavement. His face and bearing filled her with a presentiment of mischief. Mary could not see him until they stopped. But then a flame rushed into her face, kindled by the fire in his. He boarded the carriage like a captured vessel. Alice hastened to attract his attention in order to avoid an immediate outburst.

"How lovely the morning is," she said; "just because the sun is not shining in its full strength! Nothing can be more beautiful than this subdued tone over a scene as full of colour as that towards which we are driving."

But Frans did not hear; he understood nothing but Mary. The white veil thrown back over her red hair, the fresh, half open mouth, deprived him of his senses. Alice remarked that the woods had become more fragrant since the Japanese trees had grown up. Each time these flung a wanton puff in among the sober European wood scents, it was as if foreign birds with foreign screams were flying among the trees. Frans Röy at once affirmed that the native birds were thereby inspired with new song. Never had they sung so gloriously as they were singing that morning.

Alice's fear of an explosion increased. She tried to avoid it by drawing his attention to the contrasts of colour in wood and meadow and distance. The drive out to La Bagatelle is peculiarly rich in these. But Frans was sitting with his back to the horses; he had to turn away from Mary and Alice every time to see what Alice wanted him to look at. This made him impatient, the more so as Mary and he were each time interrupted in their conversation.

"Shall we not rather get out and walk a little?" said he.

But Alice was more afraid of this than anything. What might he not take into his head next?

"Do look about you!" she exclaimed. "Is it not as if the colours here were singing in chorus?"

"Where?" said Frans crossly.

"Goodness! Don't you see all the varieties of green in the wood itself? Just look! And then the green of the meadow against these?"

"I have no desire to see it! Not an atom!" He turned towards the ladies again and laughed. "Would it not really be better to get down?" he insisted again. "It's ever so much pleasanter to walk in the wood than to look at it. The same with the meadows."

"It is forbidden to walk on the grass."

"Confound it! Then let us walk on the road, and look at it all. That is surely better than being cooped up in a carriage."

Mary agreed with him.

"Do you suppose that it was to walk I drove you out here? It was to see that historic house, La Bagatelle, and the wood surrounding it. There is nothing like it anywhere. And then I meant to go as far into the country as possible. We can't do all this if we are to walk."

This appeal kept them quiet for a time. The owner of the carriage must be allowed to decide, But now Mary, too, was in wild spirits. Her eyes, usually thoughtful, shone with happiness. To-day she laughed at all Frans's jokes; she laughed at nothing at all. She was perpetually coveting flowers which she saw; and each time they had to stop, to gather both flowers and leaves. She filled the carriage with them, until Alice at last protested. Then she flung them all out, and insisted on being allowed to get out herself.

They stopped and alighted.

They had long ago passed La Bagatelle. The carriage was ordered to turn and drive slowly back; they followed.

They had not taken many steps before Frans

Röy began to turn cart-wheels, that is to say, to throw himself forward side-ways upon his hands, turn in the air, and fall again upon his feet—then to go off again sideways upon his hands, ever onwards, ever faster. Presently he turned and came back in the same way. "That is one of my circus tricks," he said, beaming. "Here is another!" He jumped up where he stood, turned round in the air, and came down again on his feet on the exact spot from which he had jumped—then did the same thing again. "Look. Exactly where I jumped from!" he exclaimed triumphantly, and did it two, three, four, five times more.

They admired. And it was a sight worthy of admiration; for the ease with which the tall, strong man performed the feat made it beautiful. Inspired by their praise, he began to spin round at such a rate that they could not bear to look. Nor was it beautiful. They turned away and screamed. This delighted him tremendously. Annoyed by the fact, Alice called out:

"You are a perfect boy; any one would take you for seventeen!"

"How old are you?" asked Mary.

"Over thirty."

They shouted with laughter.

This they should not have done. This he must

punish. Before Alice divined his intention, he seized her round the waist, turned, and was off with her in the most frantic gallop up the road, raising clouds of dust. Stout Alice struggled with all her might and screamed. But this was of no avail; it only delighted him. Her hat and her shawl fell off. Mary ran and picked them up, helpless with laughter; for these ungainly and perfectly useless attempts at resistance were irresistibly comic. At last Frans turned, and they came back again at the same wild pace and stopped where Mary stood—Alice's face distorted, perspiring, and red. Her breathless rage, incapable of utterance, made Mary explode. Frans sang: Hop sa-sa! hop-sa-sa! in front of the angry lady, until she could speak and abuse him. Then he laughed.

"And you—?" said Mary, now turning to Frans. "Has it not tired you at all?"

"Not much. I'm quite prepared to take the same trip with you."

Mary was horrified. She had just given Alice her hat, and was standing holding the shawl and her own hat, which she had taken off. With a cry she threw both from her and set off in the homeward direction, towards the waiting carriage.

Not for an instant had Frans Röy thought of doing what he threatened. He had spoken in

jest. But when he saw her run, and with a speed for which he would have given neither her nor any other woman credit, his soldier's blood took it as a challenge. Alice saw this and said hurriedly: "Don't do it." The words flung themselves in his way so insistently that he stood doubtful. But Mary yonder on the road in the white dress with the red hair above it, running with a step so swift and light that the very rhythm of it allured him, nay, bereft him of his senses . . . he was off before he knew what he was about, just as Alice called for the second time, in an agonised tone: "Don't do it!"

The strip of light above the dust of the road in front of him shone into his eyes and his imagination like the sun. It blinded him. He ran without consciousness of what he was doing. He ran as if: "Catch me! catch me!" were being shouted in front the whole time. He ran as if the winning of life's highest prize depended on his reaching Mary.

She had a long start of him. Precisely this incited to the uttermost exertion of all his powers. A race for happiness with one who desired to be beaten! Blood at the boiling point surged in his ears; desire burned in it. The longings of all these days and nights were

tumultuously urging him on to victory. Speak they would at last. No, speech would be uncalled for; he would have her in his arms.

Now Mary turned her head—saw him, gave a cry, gathered up her dress. She actually owned a still swifter pace, did she! Madness seized Frans. He believed that the cry was a lure. He saw Mary make a forward sign with her hand; he believed that she was showing where she would stop and consider herself safe. He must reach her before she got there. He, too, had a last spurt in reserve; it brought him with a rush close in upon her. He seemed to perceive the fragrance exhaling from her; next moment he must hear her breathing. He was so excited that he did not know he had touched her until she looked round. She let her dress fall at once, and after one or two more swift steps, stood still. His arm went round her waist; he was on fire; he drew her tightly to him—to hear the angriest: "Let me go!" Want of breath gave it its excessive sharpness. Frans was appalled, but felt that he must support her until she recovered breath, and therefore retained his hold. Again came with the same compressed sharpness of breathlessness: "You are no gentleman!" He let go.

The clatter of horses' hoofs was heard; the

carriage was approaching rapidly. The servants on the box must have witnessed the whole occurrence; it was to them she had waved. During his wild chase he had seen her alone.

Now she walked towards the carriage. She held her handkerchief to her face; she was crying. The servant jumped down and opened the carriage door.

Frans turned away, desperate, his mind paralysed. Alice came up. She was carrying her own shawl and Mary's hat, and went straight towards the carriage without taking notice of him. When he attempted to join her, she waved him off.

The third day after the occurrence Frans called upon Alice. He was told that she was not at home. The following day he received the same answer. After this he was absent from Paris for some days; but immediately on his return he called again. "She has just gone out," answered the servant. But this time he simply pushed the man aside and went in.

Alice stood eagerly examining a collection of objects of art; table and chairs were covered with them, they stood about everywhere. "Alice—!" said Frans, gently and reproachfully. She started, and at that moment he caught sight of her father

behind her. He at once came forward as if he had said nothing.

The art treasures were collected and laid aside, Frans assisting. Mr. Clerc left the room.

"Alice!" now repeated Frans Röy in the same reproachful tone. "You surely do not mean to close your door to me? And just when I am so unhappy?"

She did not answer.

"We who have always been such good friends and had such good times together?"

Alice looked away from him and gave no answer.

"Even if I have behaved foolishly, we two surely know each other too well for that to separate us?"

"There are limits to everything," he heard her say.

He was silent for a moment. "Limits? limits? Come now, Alice. Between us there is surely no—"

Before he could say more she broke out: "It is inexcusable to behave in such a way before other people!" She was scarlet.

"Yes. You mean?" He did not understand.

She turned away. "To treat me in such a manner before Mary——what must Mary think?"

Never until now had it occurred to him that he had behaved badly to her, to Alice, too; all this

time he had thought only of Mary. Now, ashamed of himself, dreadfully ashamed of himself, he came forward.

"Will you pardon me, Alice? I was so happy that I did not think. I didn't understand till this moment. Forgive a poor sinner! Won't you look at me?"

She turned her head towards him; her eyes were unhappy and full of tears; they met his, which were also unhappy, but beseeching. It was not long before his and hers melted into each other. He stretched out his arms, embraced her, tried to kiss her; but this he was not allowed to do.

"Alice, dear, sweet Alice, you will help me again!"

"It is of no use. You spoil everything."

"After this, I will do every single thing you ask me."

"You promised the same before."

"But now I have learned a lesson. Now I shall keep my promise. On my honour!"

"Your promises are not to be relied on. For you do not understand."

"I don't understand?"

"No, you don't understand in the least who she is!"

"I confess that I must have been mistaken, for

even now I fail to comprehend what made her so angry."

"That I can quite believe."

"Yes. When she threw everything away and ran, I felt certain that it was to get me to run after her."

"Did you not hear me call twice: 'Don't do it!'?"

"Yes, but I did not understand that either."

Alice sat down with a hopeless feeling. She said no more; she thought it useless to do so. He seated himself opposite to her.

"Explain it to me, Alice! Did you not see how she laughed when I danced off with you?"

"Has it not dawned upon you yet that there is a difference between us and her?"

"Mary Krog is most unassuming; she makes no pretensions whatever."

"Quite so. But now you are misunderstanding me again. Whereas we are ordinary beings, whom other people may touch with impunity, she dwells in a remoteness which no one as yet has diminished by one foot. It is not from pride or vanity that she does so."

"No, no!"

"She *is* like that. If she were not, she would have been captured and married long ago. You

surely don't imagine that proposals have been wanting ?"

"Everyone knows they have not."

"Ask Mrs. Dawes ! She keeps a diary of them in her thousand letters. She writes about nothing else now."

"But what, then, is the explanation of it, dear Alice ?"

"It is quite simple. She is gentle, sweet-tempered, obliging—all this and more. But she dwells in an enchanted land, into which none may intrude. She preserves it inviolate with extraordinary vigilance and tact."

"To touch her is forbidden, you mean ?"

"Absolutely ! Fancy your not understanding that yet !"

"I did understand ; but I forgot."

Frans Röy sat silent as if he were listening to something far away. Again he heard the sharp cries of fear which thrilled through the air as he drew near, saw the terrified sign to the carriage, felt Mary's trembling body, heard the ejaculation uttered with all her remaining strength, saw her walk on, weeping. All at once he understood ! What a stupid, coarse criminal he was !

He sat there dumb, miserable.

But it was not in his nature to give up. His face soon brightened.

"After all, dear Alice, it was only a game."

"To her it was more. You are surely not still in doubt as to that?"

"She has been pursued before, you mean?"

"In many different ways."

"Consequently she imagined——?"

"Of course. You saw that she did."

He did not reply.

"But now tell me, my dear Frans—was it not more than a game to you, too? Was it not all-decisive?"

He bowed his head, ashamed. Then he walked across the room and came back.

"She is a queen. She will not be captured. I should have stopped——?"

"You should never have gone after her. And she would have been yours now."

Frans seated himself again as if a heavy weight were pressing on his shoulders.

"Did she say anything?" asked Alice with a searching look.

He would have preferred not to tell, but the question was repeated.

"She said that I was no gentleman."

Alice declared this to be too bad. Frans then

asked if Mary had said anything to her in the carriage.

"Not a word. But I spoke. I abused you—well."

"She has not referred to the matter since?"

Alice shook her head. "Your name is erased from her dictionary, my friend."

Some days after this Frans received by tube-post a hurried note which informed him that at eleven that morning the two ladies would again be at the exhibition in the Champs Elysées. It was eleven when the note came.

Mary had called to ask Alice to go with her to look at a Dutch coast landscape which her father wished to buy. They considered the price rather high; possibly Alice would be able to make better terms. Mary's carriage was waiting at the door. Alice left her, wrote hastily to Frans Röy, and then went to dress, which to-day, contrary to custom, took her a long time. They drove to the exhibition, found the picture, and went to the office, where they had to wait. After making their offer and giving the address, they returned to the ground-floor of the exhibition in search of the acrobat. He stood there now in all his manly strength. Alice reached him first, and exclaimed

"Why! it is——," then stopped short and walked away from Mary. She examined the statue from every side, over and over again, without saying a word. Precisely that which distinguished Frans Röy—that his strength did not announce itself in distended muscle, but in the elasticity of a beautifully formed, lithe body—was to be observed here. Frans Röy's toss of the head, his broad forehead aslant in the air, his hand, his short, strong foot—everything was here! The statue affected the beholder like a war-song. For the first time Alice found the word for the effect which Frans produced. She was carried away by the statue as by the rhythm of a march. Exactly what she had often felt when she saw Frans walk! Was this likeness a curious accident, or had he really . . . she turned quite hot and had to walk away from the statue and look at something else.

Mary had all the time kept behind Alice, who had quite forgotten her. The question now involuntarily occurred to Alice: Does Mary understand what she sees?

She waited a little before she began to observe. Mary, who was now standing in front of the statue, with her back towards Alice, remained so long motionless that the latter's curiosity increased.

She went round and stationed herself among the statues opposite, put on her eye-glass, and looked across. Mary's eyes were half closed; her bosom was heaving. She walked slowly round the statue, then retired to a distance, came back, and stood still again midway between front and side.

Then she looked round for Alice and caught sight of the eye-glasses turned in her direction; Alice was actually holding them on, to see clearer. There could be no mistake—her face was one mischievous smile.

There are things which one woman objects to another understanding. Mary's blood surged; angry and hurt, she took Alice's look as an insult. She turned her back quickly on the acrobat and walked towards the door. But she stopped once or twice, pretending to look at other pieces of sculpture, really to obtain mastery over the uproar in her breast. At last she reached the door. She did not look round to see if Alice were following; she passed through the entrance hall and left the building.

But just as she did so, Frans Röy hurried up —as quickly as if he had been sent for and were arriving too late. He tore off his hat without getting even a nod in answer. He saw nothing but a pair of vacant eyes.

"Oh, please don't be angry any longer!" he said with his broadest east-country accent, good-humouredly and boyishly. Mary's face cleared; she could not help herself; she smiled, and was actually going to take his outstretched hand—when she saw his eyes travel with the speed of lightning to a point behind her and come back with the least little particle of triumph in them. She turned her head and met Alice's eyes. In them there was any amount both of mischief and rejoicing. There had been a plot then! Mary was transformed. As if from the highest church steeple she looked down upon them both—and left them. Her carriage was waiting a short way off; she motioned, and it came in a wide sweep to where she stood. There was no footman; she opened the door before Frans Röy could come to her assistance, and got in as if no one were there. When seated she looked—past Frans—to see if Alice were coming. Fat Alice was waddling slowly along. It was plain, even from a distance, that a wild struggle with suppressed laughter was going on within her. And when she arrived and saw Mary sitting in state looking to the one side, and Frans Röy, the giant, standing on the other like a frightened recruit, she could resist no

longer; she gave way to a fit of laughter which shook her heavy body from head to foot. She laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks, laughed so that it was with difficulty and not without assistance she found the carriage-step and hauled herself up. She sank on the seat beside Mary, convulsed with laughter; the carriage shook, as she sat with her handkerchief to her face, suppressing screams. She caught a glimpse of Mary's scarlet anger and Frans Röy's pale dismay—and laughed the louder. The very coachman was obliged to laugh too, though what the devil it was about he did not know. And thus they drove off.

Another unsuccessful expedition, another defeat of the highest hopes! It was a long time before Alice could say anything. Then she began by pitying Frans Röy.

"You are too severe with him, Mary. Goodness! how miserable he looked!" And the laughter began again.

But Mary, who had been sitting waiting for an opportunity, now broke out:

"What have I to do with your protégé?"

And as if this were not enough, she bent forward to face Alice's laughing eyes:

"You are confusing me with yourself. It is

you who are in love with him. Do you imagine that I have not seen that for ever so long? You know best yourselves in what relation you stand to each other. That is no affair of mine. But the 'De' * which you both keep up—is it for the purpose of concealment?"

Alice's laughter ceased. She turned pale, so pale that Mary was alarmed. Mary tried to withdraw her eyes, but could not; Alice's held them fast through painful changes until they lost all expression. Then Alice's head sank back, whilst a long, heavy sigh resembling the groan of a wounded animal escaped her.

Mary sat motionless, aghast at her own speech. But it was irrevocable.

Alice suddenly raised her head again and told the coachman to stop. "I have a call to make at this house." The carriage stopped; she opened the door, stepped out, and shut it after her.

With a long look at Mary, she said:

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" was answered in a low tone.

Both felt that it was for ever.

Mary drove on. As soon as she reached home, she went straight to the private drawing-room; she had something to say to her father. Before

* *You* as distinguished from the familiar *thou*.

she opened the door, she heard piano-playing, and understood that Jörgen Thiis was there. But this did not stop her. With her hat and spring cloak still on, she unexpectedly appeared in the room. Jörgen Thiis jumped up from the piano and came towards her, his eyes filling with admiration; her face was all aglow from the tumult within. But something proud and repellent in its sparkle caused him to give up his intention of closer approach.

Then his eyes assumed the gloating, greedy expression which Mary so detested. With a slight bow she passed him and went up to her father, who was sitting as usual in the big chair with a book upon his knee.

"Father, what do you say to our going home now?"

Every face brightened. Mrs. Dawes exclaimed: "Jörgen Thiis has just been asking when we intend to go; he wants to travel with us."

Mary did not turn towards Jörgen but continued: "I think the steamer sails from Havre to-morrow?"

"It does," answered her father; "but we can't possibly be ready by that time?"

"Yes, we can!" said Mrs. Dawes. "We have this whole afternoon."

"I shall be delighted to help," said Jörgen Thiis.

Now Mary bestowed a friendly look on him, before mentioning the price which Alice had advised her to offer for the Dutch coast landscape her father wished to buy. She then went off to begin her own packing.

The four met again before the hotel dinner at half-past seven. Mary came into the room looking tired. Jörgen Thiis went up to her and said:

"I hear that you have made Frans Röy's acquaintance, Miss Krog?"

Her father and Mrs. Dawes were listening attentively. This showed that Jörgen must have been talking with them on the subject before she entered. Every new male acquaintance she made was a source of anxiety to them. Mary coloured; she felt herself doing so, and the red deepened. The two were watching.

"I have met him at Miss Clerc's," replied Mary. "She and her mother spent several summers in Norway, and were intimate with his family there; they belong to the same town. Is there anything more you wish to know?"

Jörgen Thiis stood dismayed. The others stared. He said hastily: "I have just been

telling your father and Mrs. Dawes that we younger officers consider Frans Röy the best man we have. So I spoke with no unfriendly intention."

"Nor did I suspect you of any. But as I myself have not mentioned the acquaintance here, I do not think that the subject ought to be introduced by strangers."

In utter consternation Jörgen stammered that, that, that he had had no other intention in doing so than to, to, to . . . .

"I know that," Mary replied, cutting short the conversation.

They went down to dinner. At table Jörgen as a matter of course returned to the subject. It could not be allowed to drop thus. All Frans Röy's brother officers, he said, regretted that he had exchanged into the engineers. He was a particularly able strategist. Their military exercises, both theoretical and practical, had provided him with opportunities to distinguish himself. Jörgen gave instances, but the others did not understand them. So he went on to tell anecdotes of Frans Röy as a comrade, as an officer. These were supposed to show how popular and how ready-witted he was. Mary declared that they chiefly showed how boyish he was.

Thereupon Jörgen said that he had only heard the stories from others; Frans Röy was older than he.

"What do *you* think of him?" he suddenly asked in a very innocent manner.

Mary did not answer immediately. Her father and Mrs. Dawes looked up.

"He talks a great deal too much."

Jörgen laughed. "Yes; but how can he help that—he who has so much strength?"

"Must it be exercised upon us?"

They all laughed, and the strain which had been making them uncomfortable relaxed. Krog and Mrs. Dawes felt safe, as far as Frans Röy was concerned. So did Jörgen Thiis.

At half-past eight they went upstairs again. Mary at once retired to her room, pleading fatigue. She lay and listened to Jörgen playing. Then she lay and wept.

Next evening, on the sea, wide and motionless, the faint twilight ushered in the summer night. Two pillars of smoke rose in the distance. Except for these, the dull grey above and beneath was unbroken. Mary leaned against the rail. No one was in sight, and the thud of the engine was the only sound.

She had been listening to music downstairs, and had left the others there. An unspeakable feeling of loneliness had driven her up to this barren outlook—clouds as far as the eye could reach.

Nothing but clouds; not even the reflection of the sun which had gone down.

And was there anything more than this left of the brightness of the world from which she came? Was there not the very same emptiness in and around herself? The life of travel was now at an end; neither her father nor Mrs. Dawes could or would continue to lead it; this she understood. At Krogskogen there was not one neighbour she cared for. In the town, half an hour's journey off, there was not a human being to whom she was bound by any tie of intimacy. She had never given herself time to make such ties. She was at home nowhere. The life which springs from the soil of a place and unites us to everything that grows there was not hers. Wherever she made her appearance, the conversation seemed to stop, in order that another subject, suited to her, might be introduced. The globe-trotters who wandered about with her talked of incidents of travel, of the art-galleries and the music of the towns which they were visiting —occasionally, too, of problems which pursued

them, let them go where they would. But of these not one affected her personally. The conventional utterances on such subjects she knew by heart. Indeed, the whole was either a kind of practice in language, or else aimless chat to pass the time.

The homage paid her, which at times verged on worship, had begun when she was still a child and took it as fun. In course of time it had become as familiar to her as the figures of a quadrille. One incident which alarmed the whole family, a couple of incidents which were painful, had been long forgotten; the admiration she received meant nothing to her—she remained unsatisfied and lonely.

A convulsive start—and Frans Röy's giant form suddenly appeared before her—so plain, so exact in the smallest detail, that she felt as if she could not stir because of him.

He was not like the rest. Was it this that had frightened her?

The very thought of him made her tremble. Without her willing it, Alice stood beside him, fat and sensual, with desire in her eyes . . . What was the relation between these two? . . . A moment of darkness, one of pain, one of fury. Then Mary wept.

She heard a loud, dull roar, and turned in its direction. An ocean-steamer was bearing down on them—an apparition so unexpected and so gigantic that it took away her breath. It rose out of the sea without warning, and rushed towards them at tremendous speed, becoming larger and larger, a fire-mountain of great and small lights. With a roar it came and it went. One moment, and it was seen in the far distance.

What an impression it made on her, this life rushing past on its way from continent to continent, with its suggestion of constant, fruitful exchange of thoughts and labour! whilst she herself lay drifting in a little tub, which was rocked so violently by the waves from the world-colossus that she had to cling to the first support that offered.

She was alone again in the great void. Deserted. For was it not desertion that everything she had seen and heard in three continents —of the life of the nations, their toil and their pleasure, their art, their music—should have to be left behind? She had seen and heard; and now she was alone, in a dreary, stagnant waste.

AT HOME

THE reality was something quite different.

She saw, the moment she set foot on land, that both old and young were unfeignedly happy to see her again. Every face brightened. Every one whom they met on the way up to the market-place recognised and greeted her with pleasure. She had not thought of them, but they had thought of her.

From the house on the market-place they were to go on later in the day to Krogskogen, with the coasting-steamer. In the interval many of their relations called, who all expressed great pleasure at seeing them home again at last. They told what a success Mary's Spanish portrait had been—in their own town, in Christiania, and then on its tour with other pictures through the country. The notices—but these she had of course read? No, she had read no newspapers, except occasionally one published at the place where they were living. "Do you read no home newspapers?" "Yes, when Father shows me them." Had not

her father, had not Mrs. Dawes, told her anything? "No." Why, she was famous now throughout the whole of Norway. For this was the third portrait of her—or was it the fourth? Anyhow it was the finest. It had been reproduced in the illustrated newspapers; and also in an English art-magazine, the *Studio*. Did she not know that? "No." The young people here were very proud of her. They had put off their spring picnic and dance until she came home.

"You are to be fêted!"

"I?"

"The picnic is to be at Marielyst. One steamer goes from here, and another comes from the places on the opposite side. Jörgen Thiis planned it all in Paris."

"Jörgen Thiis?"

"Yes. Did he not tell you about it?"

"No."

As soon as the callers left, Mary went to her father, who was unpacking some of the art treasures which were to remain in town.

"Father, is it the case that you sent my portraits to exhibitions?"

He smiled, and said: "Yes, my child, I did. And they have given pleasure to many.

I was asked to send them. They wrote and asked me each time."

He spoke in such a gentle voice, and Mary thought it so considerate of him that he had not told her, and had forbidden Mrs. Dawes to tell—probably Jörgen Thiis too—that she did what she very seldom did, went up to him and kissed him.

So this was what her father, Mrs. Dawes, and Jörgen Thiis had so often sat whispering about. This was why the home newspapers had been kept from her. Everything had been planned—even to the proposal to travel home at this particular moment! She almost began to like Jörgen Thiis.

When they left for Krogskogen in the afternoon, a crowd of young people assembled on the pier called: "Au revoir on Sunday!"

Mary was charmed with the view as they sailed along. The short half hour was spent, as it were, in recognising one old acquaintance after another. The new, or at least much altered, high road along the coast was now finished. It looked remarkably well, especially where it cut across the headlands, often through the rock. At Krogskogen it led, as before, from the one point across the level to the other, passing close to the landing-place and directly below the chapel and the churchyard.

And Krogskogen itself—how snugly it lay! She had remembered its loneliness, but had forgotten how beautiful it was. This calm, glittering bay with the sea-birds! The ripple yonder where the river flows in, the level land stretching back between the heights, and these in their robes of green! Were the trees round the house really no higher? How nice it looked, the house—long and white, with black window frames and black foundation wall. From one chimney thick smoke was rising, in cheerful welcome. She jumped on shore before the others and ran on in front. A little girl, between eight and ten, who was running down from the house, stopped when she saw Mary, and rushed back as hard as she could. But Mary overtook her at the steps. "I've caught you!" she cried, turning her round. "Who are you?" The fair-haired, smiling creature was unable to answer. On the steps stood the maids, and one of them said that the child's name was Nanna, and that she was there to run errands. "You shall be my little maid!" said Mary, and led her up the steps. She nodded to each of the women, and felt that they were disappointed because she hurried on without speaking to them. She was longing to set foot on the thick carpets, to feel the peculiar light of the

hall about her, to see the huge cupboards and all the pictures and curios of the Dutch days. And she was longing even more to reach her own room. The silence of the stairs and of the long, rather dark passage—never had it played such a game of whispers with her as it did to-day. She felt it like something soft, half-hidden, confidential and close. It was still speaking when she reached the door of her room; it actually kept her from opening the door for a moment.

Ah!—the room lay steeped in sunshine from the open window which looked over the outbuildings to the ridge. Paler light entered from that looking on the orchard and the bay below, the water of which glittered between the trees. Beyond the trees were seen the islands and the open sea, at this moment pale grey. But from the hill, now in fairest leaf and flower, the fragrance of spring poured in. The room itself, in its white purity, lay like a receptacle for it. There everything arranged itself reverently round the bed, which stood in the middle of the floor. It was more than a bed for a princess; it was the princess herself; everything else seemed to do homage to it.

The excursion to Marielyst was in every way a

success. But during the course of it a coolness arose between Mary and Jörgen Thiis.

It happened thus. Jörgen came on board with a tall, strongly-built lady, the sight of whose broad forehead, kindly eyes, small nose, and projecting chin brought a slight blush to Mary's cheeks, which she concealed by rising and asking: "Are you not a sister of Captain Frans Röy?"

"She is," answered Jörgen Thiis. "For safety's sake we are taking a doctor with us."

"I am glad to meet you," said Mary. "Of course I have heard your brother speak of you; he has a great admiration for you."

"So we all have," Jörgen Thiis declared as he left them.

Miss Röy herself had not spoken yet. But her scrutinising eyes expressed admiration of Mary. Now she seated herself beside her.

"Are you to be at home long?"

"I can't say. Possibly we shall not travel any more; my father is not strong enough now."

Miss Röy did not speak again for some time; she sat observing. Mary thought to herself: It is tactful of her not to begin a conversation about her brother.

The two ladies kept together during the sail. And they also sat beside each other when dessert

was served out of doors at Marielyst and speeches were made. The success of the entertainment went to Jörgen Thiis's head. One after another came round to him and drank his health; he became sentimental, and made a speech. His toast was "the ideal, the eternal ideal." Fortunate the man to whom it was revealed in his youth! He bore it in his breast as his inextinguishable guiding lamp on the path of life! Pale and excited, Jörgen emptied his glass and flung it away.

This sudden earnestness came so unexpectedly upon the merry company that they laughed—one and all.

Miss Röy said to Mary: "You met Lieutenant Thiis abroad?"

"Both this winter and last," answered Mary carelessly; she was eating ice.

A young girl was standing beside them. "He is a curious man, Jörgen Thiis," said she. "He is so amiable with us; but he is said to be a perfect tyrant with the soldiers."

Mary turned towards her in surprise. "A tyrant—in what way?"

"They say that he irritates them dreadfully—is exacting and ill-tempered, and punishes for nothing."

Mary turned her largest eyes upon Margrete Röy.

"Yes, it is true," said the latter indifferently; she, too, was eating ice.

When, late in the evening, after the dance, they were all trooping down to the steamer, Mary and Jörgen arm in arm, she said to him: "Is it true that the soldiers under your command complain of you?"

"It is quite likely that they do, Miss Krog." He laughed.

"Is there anything to laugh about in that?"

"There is certainly nothing to cry about."

He was in a very jovial mood, and would fain have put his arm round her and danced down to the pier, as many of the others were doing. But Mary warded him off.

"I was very sorry to hear it," she said.

Then he understood that she was in earnest.

"The fact is, Miss Krog, that Norwegians, generally speaking, don't know what obedience and discipline are. During the short time we have them under command, we must teach them."

"Teach them in what way?"

"In small things, of course."

"By plaguing them about small things?"

"Exactly."

"Giving orders for which they see no necessity?"

"Precisely. They must learn to give up reasoning. They must obey. And what they do, they must do properly; exactly as it should be done."

Mary did not answer. She addressed another couple who now made up to them, and continued doing so till they all reached the pier.

On board the steamer she noticed that Jörgen Thiis was out of humour. When they landed, he was not standing at the gangway. Without any previous arrangement, the whole party accompanied her home to the house on the market-place. They sang and shouted under the windows until she came out on the balcony and threw flowers down on them—those she had brought home with her and any more she could find. Then they dispersed, laughing and joking.

As they were going off, she looked for Jörgen; he was not there. This vexed her; she felt that she had rewarded him ill for one of the most delightful days in her life.

Entertainments, large and small, followed one on the other. But Jörgen Thiis was absent from them all. He had first gone home to see his parents, then to Christiania. Mary had never devoted much thought to Jörgen Thiis, but now that he kept away, she could not help re-

membering that she had chiefly him to thank for the happy meeting with the young people of her own age. And that remarkable toast of his—"fidelity to the ideal"—at the time he proposed it she had merely thought: How sentimental Jörgen Thiis can be! Now she thought: Perhaps it was an allusion to me? She was accustomed to such exaggerations; and she did not care in the least for Jörgen Thiis. But when she remembered how deeply in love he had fallen at their first meeting, and how all these years he had been exactly the same whenever and wherever they met, the matter assumed a more serious aspect. The gloating, greedy eyes acquired something almost touching. The fact that he could not bear to be with her when she was the least displeased with him was another proof of the strength of his attachment. His saying nothing, but simply staying away, appealed to her.

One day Mille Falke, the consumptive head-schoolmaster's pretty, gentle wife, came out to see Mary. She had had a letter from Jörgen Thiis. A party of ten Christiania people had arranged a trip to the North Cape. They had taken their berths two months ago; now circumstances prevented their going. Jörgen Thiis had been asked if he could not take the tickets and

find nine people to accompany him on the glorious excursion. In the small towns there was more neighbourliness; it was easier there to make up such a party. Jörgen Thiis declared himself willing if Mary Krog would agree to go; he knew that in this case he would have no trouble in finding others.

Mrs. Falke laid the matter before Mary with the soft, feline persuasiveness which few could resist. Mary had, however, not the slightest desire either to sit on the deck of a steamer in the mid-summer heat, or to interrupt all that was going on at home—it was much too pleasant. At the same time she was unwilling to offend Jörgen Thiis again. She consulted with her father and Mrs. Dawes; she listened once again to Mrs. Falke —and consented.

Early in July the party assembled at night on board the coasting-steamer which was to take them to Bergen, the starting-point of the excursion proper. They were six ladies and four gentlemen. The eldest lady was the respected principal of the chief girls' school in the town—mother of one of the gentlemen and former instructress of three of the other ladies. She was the moral support of the party. Two of its members were on their honey-moon, and they were teased by the others the whole time. It was worth doing, for they were quick-

witted, both of them, and gave as good as they got. Then there was a young merchant, who paid attention to two of the ladies, unable—so it was averred—to make up his mind which he liked best. The whole party, including the ladies in question, did their best to assist him in coming to a decision. The very first night on the coasting-steamer, a schoolmaster was christened "the forsaken one." All the others, with the exception of the old lady kept up a constant racket; no one slept. He alone could neither dance nor sing, and he was incapable of flirting; he could not even be flirted with, it put him out so terribly. The consequence was that all the ladies, even Mary, made love to "the forsaken one," simply to enjoy his misery.

The originator of most of the mischief that went on was Jörgen Thiis; teasing was his passion. His inventiveness in this domain was not always free from malice.

At first he himself was unmolested. But in course of time even "the forsaken one" ventured to attack him. His appetite, his inclination to tyrannise, and especially his rôle as Mary's humble servant, were made subjects of jest. Mary had the Krogs' keen eye for exaggeration in every shape, so she laughed along with the rest, even when it was at his submissiveness to her they were laughing.

Jörgen was not in the least disturbed. He ate as much as ever, was as strict as ever in his capacity of leader, and continued, unmoved, to play the part of Mary's inventive, ever-ready squire.

The ship had its full complement of passengers, amongst them a number of foreigners; but Jörgen Thiis's merry party was the centre of attraction. Nature made such perpetual calls on the passengers' admiration that they were not in too close and constant contact with each other. It was as if they were attending some grand performance. One marvel followed the other. The length of the days, too, had its influence. Each night was shorter than the last, until there was none at all. They sailed on into unquenchable, inextinguishable light, and this produced a kind of intoxication. They drank, they danced, they sang; they were all equally highly strung. They proposed things which under other circumstances would have seemed impossible; here they were in keeping with the wildness of the landscape, the intoxication of the light. One day in a strong wind Mary lost her hat; two cavaliers jumped overboard after it. One of them was, of course, Jörgen Thiis. The minds of all were working at higher pressure than that of every day. Some of them became exhausted and slept whole days and nights. But most of

them held out—at least as long as they were northward bound—Mary amongst the number.

Jörgen Thiis, with his persistent deference, in the end obliged all of them to treat Mary more or less as he did himself. Nor did anything occur the whole time to disturb this position of hers—thanks principally to her own carefully cultivated reserve of manner.

When they returned to the coasting-steamer, genuine gratitude prompted her to invite Jörgen Thiis to go home with her to Krogskogen. "I can't stand such a sudden break-up," she said.

He stayed for some days, delighted with the beauty and comfort of everything. Such art taste as he possessed lay chiefly in the direction of knick-knacks; he was devoted to foreign curios, and of these there was abundance. The rooms and their furniture and decorations were exactly to his taste. To Mrs. Dawes, who encouraged him to speak freely, he confided that the comfort and quiet disposed him amorously. He sat often and long at the piano extemporising; and it was always in an erotic strain.

He treated Mary with the same deference when they were alone as when they were in company with others. All the time she had known him he had not let fall a single word

which could be interpreted as a preface to love-making, no, not even as the preface to a preface. And this she appreciated.

They wandered together through the woods and the fields. They rowed together to relations' houses to pay calls. Jörgen had the key to the bathing-house, where he went before any one else was up, and often again after their excursions.

Mary herself had become more sociable. Jörgen told her so.

"Yes," answered she. "The Norwegian young people associate with each other more like brothers and sisters than those of other countries, and are consequently different—freer, franker. They have infected me."

One morning Jörgen had to go to town, and Mary accompanied him. She wished to call on Uncle Klaus, his foster-father, whom she had not seen since she came home.

Klaus was sitting behind a cloud of smoke, like a spider behind its grey web. He jumped up when he saw Mary enter, declared he was ashamed of himself, and led her into the big drawing-room. Jörgen had warned her that he was not likely to be in a good humour; he had been losing money again. And they had not sat long in the empty, stiff drawing-room before he began to complain of the

times. As was his habit, he rounded his back and sprawled out his legs, supporting his elbows on them and pressing the points of his long fingers together.

"Yes, you two are well off, who do nothing but amuse yourselves!"

He possibly thought that this remark demanded some reparation, for his next was: "I have never seen a handsomer pair!"

Jörgen laughed, but coloured to the roots of his hair. Mary sat unmoved.

Jörgen accompanied her to the house on the market-place; it was quite near. He did not say a word on the way, and took leave immediately. Afterwards he sent to let her know that he would be obliged to stay in town till the evening; then he would cycle out. Mary herself left at the previously appointed hour.

On her way home in the steamer she revolved the idea: Jörgen Thiis and herself a pair. No! This she had never contemplated. He was a handsome, well-bred man, a courteous, pleasant companion, a really gifted musician. His ability, his tact, were unanimously acknowledged. Even that which at one time had repelled her so strongly, the sensuality, which would suddenly leap into his eyes and produce that

insufferable gloating expression—perhaps it was of this underlying quality that all the rest were cultivated developments? Might it not account for his appreciation of the perfect in art, in discipline, in language? Still there remained something unexplained. But it was a matter of indifference to her what it was. She cast all these reflections aside; it was no concern of hers.

As she came on board she had noticed a peasant-woman who had once been their servant; now she went and sat down beside her. The woman was gratified.

"And how is your father, Miss? I am old now, and I have known many people in my day, but never a kinder man than Mr. Krog. There's no one like him."

The affectionate warmth of these words touched Mary. The woman mentioned one instance after the other of her father's considerateness and generosity; she was still talking of it when they arrived. At first Mary felt as if nothing so pleasant as this had happened to her for a long time. Then she felt afraid. She had actually forgotten how dearly she herself loved her father, and had left off giving expression to her affection. Why? Why did she give her time and thoughts to so much else and not to him, the best and dearest of all?

She hurried up to the house. Although her father was very much of an invalid now, she had latterly spent hardly any of her time with him.

As she approached she saw Jörgen's bicycle propped against the steps; she heard him playing. But she hurried past the drawing-room, and went straight to her father, who was sitting in the office at his desk, writing. She put her arms round him and kissed him, looked into his kind eyes and kissed him again. His bewilderment was so comic that she could not help laughing.

"Yes, you may well look at me, for it is certainly not often I do this. But all the same you are dearer to me than I can tell." And she kissed him again.

"My dear child!" he said, and smiled at her assault. He was happy, that she saw. Into his eyes there gradually crept that curious brightness which none ever forgot. She thought to herself: I'll do this every day now, every day!

Jörgen and she had planned a cycling excursion back into the country. They set off next day. The relation at whose house they stopped that evening, a military man, was delighted to have a visit from them. They were persuaded to stay for several days. The young people of the neighbourhood were summoned; an excursion to a sæter

was arranged—again something quite new to Mary. "I know every country except my own," said she. She was determined to travel the next year in Norway; there not much chaperonage would be necessary. With this prospect in view Jörgen and she rode home, enjoying themselves royally.

As they were propping their bicycles against the house, little Nanna came rushing out at the door and down the steps. She was crying and did not see them, as she was looking in the other direction. When Mary called: "What is the matter?" she stopped and burst out: "Oh, come, come! I was to go and call people." Up she rushed again to tell that they were coming, Jörgen after her, Mary behind him—across the hall, up the stairs, along the passage to the last door on the right. Within, on the floor, lay Anders Krog, Mrs. Dawes on her knees beside him, weeping loudly. He was in an apoplectic fit. Jörgen lifted him up, carried him to his bed, and laid him carefully down. Mary had rushed to telephone for the doctor.

The doctor was not at home; she tried place after place to find him, a voice within her all the time crying despairingly: Why had she not been beside her father when this happened? Immediately after vowing to herself that she would

show him every day how much she loved him, she had left him! And this very day she had looked forward with pleasure to being able to travel without him! How had she come to be like this? What was the matter with her?

As soon as she had found the doctor, she hurried back to her father. He was now undressed and Jörgen had gone. But Mrs. Dawes sat on a chair beside the pillow, with a letter in her hand, in the deepest distress. The moment she saw Mary, she handed her the letter without taking her eyes from the sick man's face.

It was from a correspondent in America of whom Mary had never heard. It told that her uncle Hans had lost their money and his own. His mind was deranged, and probably had been so for a long time. Mary knew that on the male side of the Krog family it was not uncommon for the old people to become weak-minded. But she was horrified that her father should not have exercised any control over affairs. This, too, was a suspicious sign.

He must have been on his way to Mrs. Dawes with this letter when the seizure occurred, for the door had been opened and he lay close to it.

Mary read the letter twice, then turned towards Mrs. Dawes, who sat crying.

"Well, well, Aunt Eva—it has to be borne."

"Borne? borne? What do you mean? The money loss? Who cares for that? But your father! That man of men—my best friend!"

She watched his closed eyes, weeping all the time, and heaping the best of names and the highest of praise on him—in English. The words in the foreign language seemed to belong to an earlier time; Mary knelt by her father, taking them all in. They told of the days which the two old people had spent together. Each a lament, each an expression of gratitude, they recalled his friendly words, his kind looks, his gifts, his forbearance. They flowed abundant and warm, uttered with the fearlessness of a good conscience; for Mrs. Dawes had tried, as far as it lay in her power, to be to him what he was to her. The more precious the words poured forth in her father's honour over Mary's head, the poorer did they make her feel. For she had been so little to him. Oh, how she repented! oh, how she despaired!

Jörgen Thiis appeared outside the door just as she was rising to her feet. She stooped again, picked up the letter, and was about to give it to him, when Mrs. Dawes, who had also seen him, asked him to help her to her room; she must go

to bed. "God only knows if I shall ever get up again! If this is the end with him, it is the end with me too."

Jörgen at once raised the heavy body from the chair and staggered slowly off, supporting it. In Mrs. Dawes's room he rang for a maid; then he went back to Mary. She was standing motionless, holding the letter, which she now handed to him.

He read it carefully and turned pale; for a time he was quite overcome; Mary went a few steps towards him, but this he did not see.

"This has been the cause of the shock," she said.

"Of course," whispered Jörgen, without looking at her. Presently he left the room.

Mary remained alone with her father. His sweet, gentle face called to her; she threw herself down beside him again and sobbed. For him whom she loved best she had done least. Perhaps only because he never drew attention to himself?

She did not leave him until the doctor came, and with him the nurse. Then she went to Mrs. Dawes.

Mrs. Dawes was ill and in despair. Mary tried to comfort her, but she interrupted passionately: "I have been too well off. I have felt too secure. Now misfortune is at hand."

Mary started, for the thought had been in her own heart all the time.

"You are losing us both, poor child! And the money too!"

Mary did not like her mentioning the money. Mrs. Dawes felt this and said:

"You don't understand me, my poor child! It is not your fault, it is ours. We gave in to you too much. But you behaved so badly if we did not."

Mary looked up, startled: "I behaved badly?"

"I spoke to your father, child; I spoke to him on the subject often. But he was so tender-hearted; he always found some excuse."

Jörgen entered with the doctor.

"If any complication arises, Miss Krog, the worst may happen."

"Will he be paralysed?" asked Mrs. Dawes.

The doctor evaded the question; he merely said: "Quiet is all important."

Silence followed this utterance.

"Miss Krog, I cannot allow you to nurse your father. There ought to be two trained nurses."

Mary said nothing. Mrs. Dawes began to cry again. "This is a sad change of days."

The doctor took leave, and was escorted downstairs by Jörgen Thiis. When Jörgen returned, he asked softly: "Shall I go too—or can I be of any use?"

"Oh, do not leave us!" wailed Mrs. Dawes.

Jörgen looked at Mary, who said nothing; nor did she look up. She was weeping silently.

"You know, Miss Krog," said he respectfully, "that there is no one to whom I would so willingly be of service."

"We know that, we know that!" sobbed Mrs. Dawes.

Mary had raised her head, but, Mrs. Dawes having spoken, she said nothing.

When she left the room soon afterwards, Jörgen was just opening his door, which was next to Mary's. He stood for a moment with the door wide open, so that she saw the packed portmanteau behind him. She stopped.

"You are going?" she said.

"Yes," answered he.

"It will be very quiet here now."

Jörgen expected more, but no more came. Then he said:

"The shooting season begins immediately. I had intended to ask your father's permission to shoot in his woods."

"If you consider mine sufficient, you have it."

"Thank you, Miss Krog! You will allow me, too, to look in upon you sometimes, I hope?" He took her hand and bowed deeply over it.

Then he went in to take leave of Mrs. Dawes. With her he stayed ten minutes at least, coming out just as Mary was crossing the passage to her father's room.

As she stood by the bed Anders began to move, and opened his eyes. She knelt down. "Father!"

He seemed to be collecting his thoughts; then he tried to speak, but could not. She said quickly: "We know, Father; we know everything. Don't trouble about it! We'll get on beautifully all the same."

Her father's eyes showed that he took in what she said, though slowly. He tried to lift his hand, and, finding that he could not, looked at her with an expression of painful surprise; she lay down close to him, kissed him and wept.

Anders improved, however, with astonishing rapidity. Was it Mary's presence and untiring attention which helped him? The nurse said that it was.

Then came a time when, though still indefatigable in her attention to the two invalids, she learned to manage both house and farm. She took the accounts and the superintendence into her own hands. It was a task she enjoyed, for she had the gift of order and management. Mrs. Dawes was astonished.

No anxiety for the future did Mary display, no regret for the pleasures of the past. To those who pitied her she said that it was indeed sad that her father and Mrs. Dawes were ill, but that except for this she was perfectly contented.

One unusually warm day in the middle of August she had been very busy since early morning, looking forward all the time to a plunge in the sea as soon as her work was done.

Between five and six they ran down, Mary and little Nanna. They both went into the bathing-house, for it was one of Nanna's greatest pleasures to attend to Mary's beautiful hair; to-day it was to hang loose. After taking it down, Nanna ran up to the big stone on the ridge, to keep a look-out on both sides. Mary meant to go into the water with nothing on, that she might enjoy her bath thoroughly.

She swam out at once to the island. From there she could herself see the inlet on both sides and the roads. No one anywhere, no danger—therefore back again!

The sea caressed and upheld her; upon the arms that clove it the sun played; the land in front lay in the repleteness of a rich aftermath; sea-birds rocked on the waves, others screamed in the air

above Mary's head. "Imagine that I was afraid of being alone—!" thought she.

When she approached the shore she did not leave the water, but lay on her back and rested; then took a few strokes and rested again. The beach looked inviting; she lay down on it in the blazing sun, her head supported on a stone, her hair floating. Oh, how delicious! But something suddenly warned her to look up. She could not be troubled. Yes, she ought to look up to where Nanna was sitting. No, she would not; Nanna was on the look-out. Yet the suggestion had put an end to her enjoyment. When she rose to walk along to the bathing-house steps, she saw behind the big stone—Jörgen Thiis with his gun over his shoulder! The little girl was standing on the top of the stone motionless, staring at him as if she were spell-bound.

The blood rushed through Mary's veins in hot waves of fury and loathing. Is he utterly shameless? Or has he gone out of his mind? To outward appearance she behaved as if she saw nothing; she plunged into the sea and swam to the steps, walked calmly up them, and disappeared.

But her breath was coming hard and short, and she was so hot that she forgot to dry herself, forgot to dress. Hotter and hotter she grew,

until she was positively boiling with rage and desire for vengeance. The polite Jörgen Thiis had dared to insult her as she had never in her life been insulted!

Her mind wrestled with the thought of this senseless, dishonourable surprisal until she became involved in a train of ideas which carried her away. She was standing again in front of the acrobat's powerful body; Alice's knowing eyes were upon her. She trembled—then screams from the child reached her ear. In her excitement she almost screamed back. What could it mean? There was no window on that side. She dared not look out at the door, for she was naked. Never had she dressed in such haste, but for this very reason everything went wrong, and time passed. She would not appear before Jörgen Thiis half dressed.

Just as she was ready to open, she heard the pitapat of little Nanna's steps on the bridge from the bank. Mary tore the door open; the child came rushing in, hid her head in her mistress's dress, and cried and sobbed so that she could not utter a word.

Mary managed to soothe her, principally by promising that she should be allowed to dress her hair. Then Nanna told that before she had noticed anything, Mr. Thiis was standing behind the

stone. She had been sitting singing and had not heard him. He made threatening signs to her. Oh, how frightened she had been—for he looked so dreadful! oh, so dreadful! The moment Mary went into the house, he had rushed straight towards it.

"Jörgen Thiis?"

"Then I screamed as loud as I could scream! *That* stopped him. He turned and was coming back to me, but I jumped off the stone and ran into the wood——" Here words failed her; she hid her face in Mary's skirts again and sobbed.

This was worse than ever! Mary at first felt totally unable to comprehend.

Then it gradually dawned upon her that Jörgen must be another man than she took him for—that he had violent passions—that he had the daring to act with utter recklessness. What if he had come . . .?

Conscious of her pride and strength, she knew that it would have meant banishment for ever—impossibly anything else.

On the way home she had to send Nanna on in front, because she herself felt hardly able to set one foot before the other, so overpowering were her thoughts.

How could a man control himself in daily inter-

course when he was possessed by such passionate desire? It must have been accumulating for ages, or he would never have succumbed to this assault upon himself, or made this assault upon her.

Had he been burning with desire all these years? His homage, his respect, his unwearying attention—was it all smoke from the subterranean crater, which had now suddenly ejected red-hot stones and ashes?

So Jörgen Thiis was dangerous? He did not lose by this in Mary's estimation; he gained! It was praiseworthy, the compulsion which he had exercised over himself—from reverence for her. Ought she to be so angry with him because temptation had set loose the rebellious powers which he had chained?

All the rest of the day, and even when she was undressing, her mind was busy with these thoughts. Next morning she determined that a stop must be put to this. It was a stirring of something which she had suppressed once before, and which must not be allowed to disturb the new order of her life. Therefore she applied herself more diligently than ever to her tasks, and added to their number. She undertook a thorough examination of her father's books and loose memoranda—of the latter there were far too many—in order to

find out the general state of his affairs. He must have Norwegian investments, and he could not possibly have spent all the money that had been sent from America. She was, however, unable to find what she was looking for. She could not trouble her father, and Mrs. Dawes knew nothing.

But, close as Mary's application to business was, thoughts of yesterday managed to insinuate themselves. Jörgen's intention had, of course, been to bathe, and to come up and call afterwards. After what had happened he could not do so. Would he ever come again? Would he do so without being invited? He had effectually damaged his own cause. She heard shots in the woods near at hand on the following days; and other people mentioned having heard shooting farther off. But he did not come on the second day, nor yet on the third, nor on the fourth. Of this she approved.

Her thoughts running much on the woods and the heights, her steps also took that direction one day before dinner. The sudden change of weather which is usual in Norway in the second half of August had taken place. It was cold now; she felt the climb with the north wind playing round her very refreshing. She chose the ascent a little below the houses; it was the easiest. She went up quickly, for she was accustomed to the climb

and was longing to be at the top, standing in the wind and looking out over the stormy sea. Even from the first knoll she had an enjoyable view of the meadows, where the farm-servants were spreading out the second crop of hay to dry, of the bay, of the islands, of the sea, black to-day, and bearing on its breast numbers of sailing vessels and one or two steamers. Overhead the crows were making a terrible clamour; a trial was unmistakably going on. She saw one after the other cleave the air and disappear farther along the ridge, towards the north. The noise became louder the higher she climbed. She hurried; it might be possible to save the criminal. A cold shiver of agitation ran through her. She thought that when she reached the next height she would be certain to see the birds. Instead she saw, as soon as her head cleared the ridge, a man lying flat on the ground some distance off to the north, directly above the house.

It was Jörgen Thiis! Mary promptly lowered her head again; then the joy of revenge took possession of her, and she mounted quickly, determinedly. Jörgen saw her, jumped up, looking agitated and ashamed, pulled off his cap, put it on again, seemed not to know where to look or to turn. Mary approached slowly, thoroughly enjoying his embar-

rassment. While still some distance off she called: "So this is your idea of sport! Are you shooting our hens to-day?" Then, as she came nearer: "You have no dog with you? No, of course not; you can shoot hens without a dog. Or perhaps you have none?"

"Yes; but I am not shooting to-day. I have finished."

This quiet, inoffensive answer, which he gave without daring to look at her, produced a revulsion of feeling in Mary. No, she would not be unkind to him! She had heard enough of his uncle's tyranny.

The crows were clamouring louder than ever.

"Listen! They are condemning some poor wretch! I wonder you don't go and help him."

"Indeed I ought to!" cried Jörgen, happy to escape. He picked up his gun and ran, she following, up a short ascent and then along a path on the level. Upon and around two old trees the grey administrators of justice were raving; there were hundreds of them. But the moment they saw a man with a gun, they scattered, cawing, in every direction. Their task was accomplished.

Between two large trees lay an unusually large crow, featherless and bleeding, in its death struggle. Jörgen was going to take hold of it.

"No, don't touch it!" called Mary, and turned away.

She went straight down again as she had come. Hearing Jörgen follow, she stopped.

"You will come with me, won't you, and dine?"

He thanked her. They walked on together silently until they came to where he had been lying. Then he hastily asked:

"How are things going at home?"

She smiled. "Thank you, really well, considering everything."

The smoke from the chimney curled into the air. The roofs with their glazed blue tiles looked affluently comfortable. The large gardens on both sides with their gravel walks lay like striped wings outstretched from the houses. The whole had an air of life, as if it might rise into the air at any moment.

"Had you been lying long here?" Mary asked unmercifully; she regarded Jörgen's mood as a species of possession.

He did not answer. She set off on the last, very steep part of the descent.

"Shall I help you?"

"No, thank you; I have come down here oftener than you."

It was a silent repast. Jörgen always ate

slowly, but never had he eaten so slowly as to-day. Mary despatched each course quickly, and then sat and watched him, making an occasional remark, which was politely answered. His eyes, which generally swept over her like waves, ready to draw her in, had difficulty to-day in rising higher than the plate before them. Stopping suddenly, he said: "Are you not well?"

"Yes, thank you; but I have had enough."

A quarter of an hour later Jörgen came out of Anders Krog's room. Mary had just left Mrs. Dawes's, and was opening the door of her own. Jörgen said:

"It seems to me that your father is much better, Miss Krog."

"Yes, he can speak a little now, and also move his arm a little."

Jörgen evidently did not hear.

"Is this your room?—I have never seen it."

She moved out of the way; he looked, and looked again.

"Won't you go in?"

"May I?"

"Certainly."

He approached the threshold and crossed it slowly, she following. Then he stood perfectly still, breathing deeply, she at his side. Was the

room hung with lace? He could not collect his impressions . . . the bed and the furniture, white with blue, or blue with white; Cupids on the ceiling; paintings, amongst them one of her beautiful mother, with flowers in front of it . . . and a fragrance—exhaled not by the flowers alone, but by Mary herself and her belongings. She was there, beside him, in her blue dress with the elbow-sleeves. In the midst of this purity of fragrance and colour he felt ashamed of himself—so ashamed that he could have rushed out. He could not control his feeling; his breast heaved; he trembled, and was on the point of bursting into tears. Then two white arms gleamed, and he heard something said—blue and white and white and blue, the words also. The door was closed behind him—it must have been done to conceal his weakness. The two white arms gleamed again, and he heard distinctly: "Why, Jörgen! Jörgen!" He felt a hand on his arm, and sank on to a chair. She had really said "Jörgen"—said it twice. Now she stroked his forehead and smoothed the hair back from it, with a touch soft as a flower-petal. It loosed something; everything hard and painful melted under her hand and flowed away, leaving an indescribable feeling of warmth. She who now bent over him was, in truth, the first who had helped

him since he was a child. He had been so lonely! There was confidence in him in the touch of her hand. How undeserved! But how it comforted him! He dreamed that he, too, was good, was under the control of beneficent powers. The white and the blue spread a canopy over him. Underneath it these large, sympathetic eyes drew his soul into theirs. He said apologetically and very low: "I could not bear it any longer." What it was he had not been able to bear, she understood, for she immediately moved away.

"Mary!" he whispered. The word fell involuntarily from his lips; he was thinking aloud. It alarmed him, it alarmed her. She moved farther away; a confused look came into her eyes; something as it were failed her. He saw this—and before she could foresee, before he himself knew what he was doing, he was beside her, embracing her, pressing her close to him. Excited by the feeling of her body against his, he kissed, kissed, wherever his lips reached. She bent away from him, now to this side, now to that, upon which he kissed her neck, round and round. She felt that she was in danger. She had only one arm free, but with it she pushed him from her, at the same time bending her body so far back that she was on the point of falling.

This brought him above her; desire awoke, he would take advantage of the situation. But he had to loosen his right arm to grasp her with. In doing so he released her left arm; she set it against his breast with all her strength, and was now able to turn sidewards and rise to her feet. Their eyes met, fierce and flaming. Neither spoke. They were breathing short and hard.

"Mary!" screamed some one outside. It was Mrs. Dawes. Mrs. Dawes, who was supposed to be unable to leave her bed, stood in the passage. "Mary!" she screamed once again, as if she were about to faint. Both rushed out. Mrs. Dawes was standing in her night-dress outside her open door, leaning against the wall. She was in the act of falling when Jörgen Thiis sprang forward and caught her. One servant after the other rushed upstairs—even little Nanna came. Jörgen stood supporting Mrs. Dawes until, with their united strength, they lifted her and carried her in. She was incapable of setting her foot to the ground again. Her eyes were closed; whether she was in a faint or not they did not know. She was a terrible weight. It was all they could do to get her across the threshold. Then they proceeded slowly towards the bed; but the worst was to come, the lifting her in. Every time the

heavy body reached the edge of the bed, the legs refused to follow, and down the unfortunate lady slipped again. She did not help herself in the least, she only groaned; and before they could get a proper grip, she was on the floor. When they had once again raised the weighty mass, but not far enough for it to hold itself in position unsupported, they stood helpless, for they had no idea how to manœuvre it farther. Nanna burst out laughing and ran out of the room. Jörgen shot a furious glance after her. This was too much even for Mary. Three minutes ago she had been engaged in a desperate struggle—now she was seized with such an inclination to laugh that she, too, had to run away. She was standing outside with her handkerchief to her mouth, doubled up with laughter, when the nurse came out of her father's room; he wished to know what was going on. Mary went to him. She could hardly tell him for laughing—tell him, that is, about Mrs. Dawes's position, and Jörgen's and the servants' struggles. Her father tried to ask why Mrs. Dawes had been in the passage. This stopped Mary's laughter. One of the maids came from the other room and said that Mrs. Dawes was now in bed, and that she wished to speak to Miss Krog.

Jörgen was standing at the foot of the bed.

Mrs. Dawes lay groaning and weeping and calling for Mary. No sooner did Mary appear at the door than she began:

"What was happening to you, child? Sudden terror seized me. What was going on?"

Mary went up to the bed without looking at Jörgen. She knelt down and put her arm round her old friend's neck.

"Oh, Aunt Eva!" she said, and laid her head on the old lady's breast. Presently she began to cry.

"What is it? What is it? What is making you so unhappy?" moaned Mrs. Dawes, stroking the beautiful hair.

At last Mary looked up. Jörgen Thiis had gone; but she still kept silence.

"I have never felt like that," began Mrs. Dawes again, "except when something dreadful was happening."

Mary kept silence.

"Had Jörgen Thiis anything to do with it?"

Mary gave her a look.

"Ah! that is what I feared. But remember, my child, that he has loved you since the first time he saw you—you, and no one else. That means a great deal. And never once so much as hinted it to you—has he?"

Mary shook her head.

"It's no small thing, that either. It shows strength of character. He has served you and he has honoured you—don't be too hard on him. Not till now, when you are poor, does he dare—but what was it?"

Mary waited a little; then she said:

"First I thought he was ill. Then he suddenly lost his senses."

"Oh, I could tell you something. I too. . . . Yes, yes, yes!" She seemed lost in thought. Then she murmured: "Those who go for years. . . ."

But Mary cut her short. "Don't let us talk any more about it," she said, rising.

"No. Only it is. . . ."

"No more on that subject, please!" repeated Mary, walking to the window. Standing there she heard Mrs. Dawes say: "You must let me tell you that he has spoken to me—asked me if he dared offer himself to you. He can imagine no greater happiness than to help you when we are no longer able. But he thinks that you are too unapproachable."

Mary made an involuntary movement. Mrs. Dawes saw it.

"Don't be too hard on him, Mary. Do you know, child, that your father and I think. . . ."

"Now, Aunt Eva!" Mary turned sharply towards her—not as if she were angry, but yet in such a manner as to check the words on the old lady's lips.

Mary remained in the room. She would not risk meeting Jörgen Thiis. When she was doing some small service for Mrs. Dawes, the latter said: "You know, child, that Jörgen is to have Uncle Klaus's money?" As Mary did not answer, she ventured to go on. "And he believes that Uncle Klaus will help him if he marries." This, too, Mary allowed to pass unnoticed.

When there was no longer any danger, she went to her own room. There she recalled the scene from beginning to end. Her cheeks burned, but she was astonished that, dreadful though it had been, she was not really angry.

Just as she was thinking: What will happen next? there was a gentle knock at the door. Now she felt angry, and inclined to jump up and turn the key. Presently, however, she said: "Come in!" The door was opened and closed, but she did not look round from where she sat in her big chair. Gently, humbly, Jörgen came forward and knelt down on one knee in front of her, hiding his face with his hands. There was nothing in the action that offended her. He was strongly agitated. She looked down upon the handsome head with the soft

hair, and her eyes fell on the long, true musician's fingers. Something refined about him conciliated her. But a mournful: "Shall I go!" was all that came from him. She waited a little, then in a low voice answered: "Yes." He let his hands drop, seized one of hers and pressed his lips to it—long, but reverently; then rose and left the room.

During the kiss, reverential as it was, a feeling of excitement passed through Mary, of the same nature as that which, when he kissed and kissed again, had made her almost faint away. She sat still, long after he had gone, wondering at this. She once more recalled every particular of their struggle, and shuddered. "Why am I not angry with him?"

Another knock was heard. It was the maid with a request from Mrs. Dawes that Mary would come to her.

"You have let him go, child?"

Mrs. Dawes was in real distress. In her agitation she sat up, supporting herself on one arm. Her cap was awry upon her grey, short hair; the fat neck was redder than usual, as if she were too hot.

"Why did you let him go?" she repeated.

"It was his own wish."

"How can you say such a thing, child? He has been here complaining. He would give his life to stay! You don't understand in the least.

You do nothing but reject his advances, and torture him."

She lay down again, in exhaustion and despair. The word "torture" produced a momentary comic impression on Mary; but she herself had the feeling that she ought to have spoken to Jörgen before she let him go. That he was to go, she was quite determined.

On these events followed rather a hard time for them all. A change in the weather affected Anders Krog unfavourably; he was unable to take sufficient nourishment, and had more difficulty in speaking. Mary was much with him; and at these times his eyes rested on her and followed her so persistently that she almost felt afraid.

Mrs. Dawes sent small notes in to him. She could not give up her writing, even in bed. He looked long at Mary each time one of these notes came; so she guessed what they were about.

Mrs. Dawes said to her one day: "You overestimate your own powers when you believe that you can live here alone with us."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that, tired as you may be of society in spring, when winter comes it will exercise its attraction again. You are too much accustomed to it."

Mary made no answer at the time, but some

days later—the weather had long been bad, and she had not been out—she said to Mrs. Dawes: "You may be right in believing that the life we have lived all these years has taken strong hold of me."

"Stronger than you have any idea of, child."

"But what would you have me do? I cannot leave here. Nor do I wish to."

"No. But you could have a change sometimes."

"How?"

"You know quite well what I mean, child. If you married Jörgen, he would live sometimes here with you, and you sometimes at Stockholm with him."

"A curious married life!"

"I don't believe you can combine the two things in any better way."

"Which two things?"

"What life demands of you and what you are accustomed to."

Mary felt that what Mrs. Dawes had just said expressed her father's wish. She knew that what gave him most anxiety was her future, and that a marriage with Jörgen which ensured Uncle Klaus's protection would give him a feeling of security. It oppressed her to think how little regard to her father's wishes she had hitherto shown.

These days, with their deliberations, struck her as resembling the recitative in an opera, the part which connects two important actions. Now that the season was advancing, she felt like a captive when she looked out across the bay. When she stood on the hill, watching autumn's stern entrance in foaming breakers, she knew that it was bringing imprisonment for the winter. Her spirit stirred in rebellion; she was accustomed to something so different.

Something in her blood stirred too. Her tranquillity was gone. As a memory, Jörgen was not repellent. The atmosphere which he brought with him was actually sympathetic.

That her father had been incapacitated by an apoplectic shock, that Jörgen had been on the spot when this occurred, that he was her father's choice—was there not something in this that linked them together? Was there not fate in it?

To make her appearance at Jörgen's side in Stockholm,* and afterwards to be sent farther afield—could there be a more fitting conclusion to her life of travel, a better opportunity of turning to advantage all that she had learned during the course of it?

* The Foreign Office of Sweden was at that time the Foreign Office of Norway also.

Uncle Klaus should help them—help them generously. She knew her power over Uncle Klaus.

"After all, Aunt Eva dear," she said one day when she sat chatting beside Mrs. Dawes's bed; "I think you may write to Jörgen."

Mary herself was standing on the pier when the steamer came in. It was Saturday afternoon; all that could do so were leaving town to enjoy the last days of autumn in the country. The weather was beautiful; in the south of Norway it can be so till far on in September. Mary was dressed in blue and carried a blue parasol, which she waved to Jörgen and some of her girl friends who were standing beside him. All on board moved towards the gangway to watch the meeting.

Jörgen felt, as soon as he reached her side, that he must be cautious. He divined that she had come to meet him here in order that their meeting might not be private.

On the way up to the house they talked of the swallows, which were now assembling for their departure—of the farm-overseer, who had just shot a huge eagle—of the writing-board which Mrs. Dawes had had constructed—of the good aftermath, of the price of fruit and turnips. In the hall she left him with a short "Excuse me!" and

hurried upstairs. The boy who was carrying Jörgen's portmanteau had followed them in; Jörgen and he stood still, not knowing where to go. Then Mary called from above: "This way, please!" Opening the door of the visitors' room next her own, she told the boy to take the portmanteau in there. To Jörgen she said: "Shall we go and see Father?" She led the way. The nurse was not in the room. Probably it was to send her away that Mary had run up first.

A light kindled in the sick man's eyes as he saw Jörgen enter. As soon as the door was closed, Mary went up to her father, bent over him, and said: "Jörgen and I are engaged now, Father."

All the affection and happiness that a human face can express beamed from Anders Krog's. Smiling, Mary turned towards Jörgen, who, pale and agitated, was prepared to rush forward and embrace her. But he felt that though his astonishment, his gratitude, and his adoration were quite acceptable to her, she desired no such manifestation of them. This did not detract from his happiness. He met her smiling eyes with an expression of intense, perfect delight. He pressed the hand which Anders Krog could move; he

looked into his tearful eyes, his own filling. But no word was spoken until Mary said: "Now we must go to Aunt Eva."

With a feeling of triumph she led the way. He followed, admiring. His heart was full of many feelings, not least among them admiration of the magnanimity with which she had forgiven. He thought: Out in the passage she will turn round, and then . . . But she went straight to Mrs. Dawes's door and knocked.

When Mrs. Dawes saw Jörgen, she clapped her fat hands, tugged at her cap, and tried to sit up, but could not for excitement. She fell back again, wept, blessed them, and stretched out her arms. Jörgen allowed himself to be embraced, but would not kiss her.

As soon as sensible conversation became possible, Mary said: "Don't you think too, Aunt Eva, that we ought to go and call on Uncle Klaus to-morrow?"

"Most certainly I do, my child! most certainly! Why should there be any delay?"

Jörgen was radiant. Mary retired, that the two might have a confidential talk.

When Jörgen and she met again, he understood that the watchword was: "Look, but do not touch!" This was hard; but he acknowledged

it to be only just that one who had presumed as he had should be compelled to control himself. Mary intended to be her own mistress.

In her triumphant mood she was more beautiful than ever. It seemed to Jörgen an act of grace when she addressed him as "thou." And she condescended no further. He went on hoping, but she gave no more—not the whole of that day. He betook himself to the piano and there poured forth his lament. Mary opened the doors, so that Mrs. Dawes might hear the music. "Poor boy!" said Mrs. Dawes.

Next day Mary did not come downstairs until it was time to set off on their expedition to Uncle Klaus's.

"You are *la grande dame* to-day, and no mistake!" said Jörgen, inspecting her admiringly. She was in her most elegant Parisian walking costume. "Is it to make an impression on Uncle Klaus?"

"Partly. But it is Sunday, you know.—Tell me," and she suddenly became serious; "does Uncle Klaus know about father's misfortune?"

"He knows about his illness, if you mean that."

"No; I mean the cause of it?"

"That I can't say. I came straight from home. I have told nothing—even at home."

Of this Mary approved. Consequently they were on the pleasantest, most confidential terms, both during the walk down to the steamer and on board. There they sat talking in whispers of their wedding, of furlough for the first month after it, of life in Stockholm, of her visits to him there, of his visit to Krogskogen at Christmas, of a trip to Christiania now—in short, there was not a cloud in their sky.

They found Uncle Klaus in his smoke-filled den, where they rather imagined than saw him. He himself was quite startled when Mary in all her glory appeared before him. He led them hurriedly into the large, stiff drawing-room. Even before they were seated, Jörgen said: "We have come, Uncle, to tell you—"

He got no farther, for Uncle Klaus saw in their radiant faces the news which they brought.

"My heartiest congratulations!" The tall man bowed, offering a hand to each. "Yes—every one says that you are the handsomest couple ever seen in this town. For," he added, "we engaged you to each other long ago."

Hardly were they seated before his face became gloomy. He looked compassionately at Mary. "But your father, my poor child!"

"Father is much better now," she answered evasively. Uncle Klaus looked searchingly at her. "But he can never. . . ." He stopped; he was not capable of putting his thought into words; neither was Mary. They sat silent.

When they began to speak again, it was of the unusually bad times. It seemed as if there were to be no end to them. Investments were yielding no interest, the shipping trade was in a bad way, there were no new undertakings, money was not forthcoming. Whilst they were talking, Uncle Klaus looked several times at Jörgen as if he would put more questions but for his presence. Mary understood, and made a sign to Jörgen, who rose and asked permission to go, as he had an appointment with some friends in town. It was, thus, tacitly agreed upon between Mary and him that she should have a private interview with Uncle Klaus. But what was it Uncle Klaus wished to speak to her about? She was most curious.

As soon as the door closed behind Jörgen, the old man, with an anxious look, began: "Is it true, my poor child, that your father has had great losses in America?"

"He has lost everything," Mary replied.

Klaus jumped up, pale with the shock.

"Lost everything?"

He stared at her, open-mouthed and turning purple. Then exclaiming: "Good Lord! This is a simple enough explanation of the shock!" began to march up and down the room as if no one else were present. The wide trousers twisted themselves round his legs; he waved his long arms.

"He has always been a confiding simpleton! an absolute fool! Fancy having a fortune like that invested in another man's business and never looking after it! What a damned—" Here he stopped suddenly and asked in astonishment: "What do you mean to marry upon—?"

Mary had felt herself mortally insulted long before this question came. To behave thus in her presence—to speak thus of her father in her hearing! Nevertheless she answered archly and with her sweetest smile: "On our expectations from you, Uncle Klaus!"

Klaus's astonishment was beyond all measure. She tried to moderate it before it found vent; she joked—said in English that she felt dreadfully sorry for him, as she knew what a poor man he was! But he paid no more attention to her than a bear to the twitter of birds.

Out it came at last. "It is like that scoundrel Jörgen to speculate upon me!" Marching up and down again, faster than before, he

continued: "Ha, ha! I might have known it! Whenever anything goes wrong, it is I who must come to the rescue—and at this moment, too, when I am hardly earning my bread! I never knew anything so impudent in my life!" He did not see her, he did not see anything. The rich man was accustomed to give free vent to his petulance, anger, insolence. "Jörgen deserves—confound him!—that I should stop the allowance I give him! He does nothing but ask for more. And now I am to——ha, ha! It's just like him!"

Mary listened, pale as death. Never before had she been so humiliated; never had any human being treated her otherwise than with the deference paid to a privileged person.

But she did not lose her head. "I keep Father's accounts now," she said coldly; "and I see from them that there is money of his in your hands."

"Yes," said Klaus, without stopping and without looking at Mary; "oh, yes—two hundred thousand kroner or so. But if you keep the accounts, you also see that at present these investments hardly yield anything."

"It is not so bad as that," she replied.

"Well—what about them?" asked he, standing

still. An idea suddenly occurred to him: "Has Jörgen asked you to sell out?"

"Jörgen has asked nothing of me," Mary said, and rose to her feet.

As she stood there tall, pale, stately, facing him so bravely, Klaus felt himself worsted. He could do nothing but stare. When she said: "I am sorry that I did not know before what kind of man you are!" all his superiority vanished. He felt stupid and helpless, unable to answer, unable even to move. He allowed her to go—the very last thing he intended!

He looked out at the window and saw her sweep past towards the market-place. What a vision of proud beauty she was!

When, in course of time, Jörgen came to fetch Mary, or rather to stay to dinner there with her —for he was certain that they would be invited— an even more violent explosion of wrath awaited him; because now Uncle Klaus was extremely dissatisfied with himself too.

"Why the devil did you not come alone? You were afraid!—And you wanted her to sell shares now, when they are worth nothing—like the cursedly extravagant, reckless fellow you always have been!"

Uncle Klaus was wrong; but Jörgen knew him

—knew that he must not answer. He slunk away and joined Mary at the house in the market-place, even more wretched than the day when she found him on the ridge, gazing down into the lost paradise. She herself had been weeping with anger and disappointment; but there was abundance of elasticity in her; now came the rebound. Their fall from the triumphant elevation of half-an-hour ago had been so precipitous that when Jörgen's misery was added as a finishing touch, the whole became ridiculous. She laughed so heartily, so exhilaratingly, that even Jörgen was cured. A quarter of an hour later the two went out to order a good dinner, with champagne. They had agreed to take a walk whilst it was being prepared. But no sooner did they feel the delicious fresh air, than Jörgen rushed upstairs again and telephoned to Krogskogen that they were coming out to dine there. It was a good two hours' walk by the new coast-road—how they would enjoy it!

They set off at a rapid pace. It was the very weather for walking, this bright, cool autumn day with the fresh breeze.

The road followed the coast line, rounding all the rocky headlands; they looked forward to the constant changes—from shore to height, from

height to shore. On the sea, dark blue to-day, sailing ships and columns of smoke were to be seen, far as the eye could reach. It being Sunday, there were also pleasure-boats out, some gliding about among the islands, others venturing out to the open sea.

At their quick pace, the two young people were soon in the outskirts of the town. They passed a pretty little house in a garden.

"Who lives there?" asked Mary, admiring it.

"Miss Röy, the doctor," answered Jörgen, immediately adding: "Our annoyance and disappointment made me forget to tell you that I met Frans Röy in town."

Unconsciously Mary stood still; involuntarily she blushed. "Frans Röy?" she repeated, looking hard at him—then walked on without waiting for an answer.

"He is here to inspect the operations at the harbour. You know that Irgens is dead."

"The engineer? is he dead?"

"They say now that Captain Röy will probably take his place."

"Is it work for a man like him?"

"Many are no doubt asking the same question —asking what brings him here," laughed Jörgen.

Mary looked at him and he at Mary. Then he went nearer to her. "But now he comes too late."

He had expected an understanding glance in answer—possibly with a little happiness in it. She walked on without looking at him, and without speaking.

They were silent for a long time, walking fast in the refreshing autumn breeze. At last she turned towards him, with the intention of giving him a pleasant surprise.

"Do you know, Jörgen, that Father has two hundred thousand kroner invested in Uncle Klaus's business?"

"He has two hundred and fifty thousand," Jörgen answered.

She was much surprised—in the first place by Jörgen's knowing, in the second, by the fifty thousand.

"Uncle Klaus himself said two hundred thousand."

"Yes, your father has that sum invested in Uncle's ships and commercial enterprises. But lately, before he was taken ill, he sent Uncle fifty thousand more, which he had lying idle."

"How do you know?"

"Uncle told me."

"There is no note of this last sum in father's books."

"No; your father probably did not take the trouble to enter it; he was not in the habit of doing so. Besides"—here Jörgen paused—"are you in possession of all your father's business papers?"

Into this subject Mary would not enter; she knew that the question was a natural one; but how in the world did Jörgen——? Perhaps through Mrs. Dawes. What he had told her, however, rejoiced her. She stood still; there was something she wanted to say. But the wind caught up her skirts, unloosed some of her hair, and blew about her scarf.

"How perfectly lovely you look!" Jörgen exclaimed.

"But Jörgen—then there is nothing in the way!"

"We can marry, you mean?"

"Yes!" and off she started.

"No, dear. The shares are yielding almost nothing just now."

"What does that matter? We'll risk it, Jörgen!" she cried, radiant with health and courage.

"Without Uncle's consent?" asked Jörgen in a despondent tone.

Mary stood still again. "He would disinherit you?"

Instead of answering directly, Jörgen began mournfully: "I wish you knew, Mary, what I have had to bear from Uncle, from the day he adopted me—the things he has demanded of me, the things he has persecuted me for. To this very day he treats me like a naughty schoolboy. The worst of his bad temper is vented upon me."

The mixture of unhappiness and bitterness depicted on his face led Mary involuntarily to exclaim: "Poor Jörgen — now I begin to understand!"

They walked on. She reflected that Jörgen's power of self-control had been acquired in a hard school; there he had also learned the art of concealment. She could not but admire his tenacity of purpose. What had it not accomplished! Think of his music alone! It, however, had been a great consolation to him. Now she understood his extreme politeness; now she understood his sentimentality; she understood what had made him so exacting and severe with those under his command.

She saw that she herself had probably added to his unhappiness. His long, silent love for her had only been an additional burden; for she had not given him one encouraging word—very much

the reverse! What wonder that at last it should have become a kind of possession!

"Poor Jörgen!" she said again, and took his hand.

It was the first token of affection she had bestowed upon him. She had to draw her hand away again immediately to hold down her dress, for a strong wind was blowing at the point, and a sailing-boat was tacking just below them. The people in it waved up to them, and they waved back. How fresh the air was! How brilliantly blue the fjord!

As they were descending towards the bay, Mary asked: "Do you really believe that Uncle Klaus will disinherit you if we marry?"

"My dear girl, we have nothing to marry on!"

"We can sell these shares," she said undauntedly.

"If we were to sell them at their present price, in order to be able to marry at once, he would be absolutely certain to cut me off."

But Mary would not give in. "There are our woods."

"It will be several years before there is any timber to fell."

How well informed Jörgen was! How carefully he had thought the whole thing out!

They had now reached the stretch of level road which led along the shore to the last headland before Krogskogen. At a farm here there was a surly old Lapland dog. Mary and he were good friends. He always barked a little as people came up; probably he did not see well; but as soon as he scented an acquaintance his tail began to wag.

To-day he was furious.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mary, "is it you who are making him so angry, Jörgen?"

Jörgen did not answer, but stooped to pick up a small stone. When the dog saw this, he scurried off with his tail between his legs to the shelter of a heap of sticks, and there continued to bark.

"Don't do it!" said Mary, as she saw Jörgen taking aim.

"It will be interesting to see whether or not he retreats in the exact direction of my aim—if he does, the stone will hit him on the back." As Jörgen spoke, he pretended to throw. Off rushed the dog. Then he threw, and the stone landed exactly where he had said. The dog howled.

"You see!" said Jörgen exultingly. "There are not many who can throw like that, I can tell you."

"Do you shoot equally well?"

"Certainly. What I do, Mary—it isn't much, I know—but I do it fairly well."

This she was obliged to admit. The dog's distant fury also confirmed the statement.

As they were taking the short cut up to the house, Jörgen began: "Do you think we should say anything to Mrs. Dawes or to your father about this?"

"About Uncle Klaus?"

"Yes. It will only distress them. Can't we say that Uncle Klaus asked us to wait till spring?"

Mary stood still. Such a line of action was not to her mind. But Jörgen continued:

"I know Uncle Klaus better than you do. He will repent soon. He will certainly not give in to us; but he will make a proposal of his own—probably what I am asking you to say—that we should wait till spring."

Mary had already discovered how well informed Jörgen was; so she could not but allow that he was probably better able to judge than she. But she was unaccustomed to roundabout methods.

"Let me manage it," Jörgen said. "I'll spare the old people a disappointment."

"But what am *I* to say, then?" asked Mary.

"What is perfectly true. That Uncle Klaus was delighted to hear of our engagement; but that as times are so bad just now, we shall be obliged to wait. And this is really the case."

Mary agreed, the more willingly because she thought it considerate of Jörgen to wish to spare the old people. For this he received her best thanks—and her hand again. He kept hold of it until they reached the house, and even whilst they mounted the steps. He thought to himself: "This is the pledge of a kiss in the hall. But I'll take ten!"

He opened the door and let Mary pass in first. Nodding brightly to him as she passed, she made quickly for the stairs and disappeared up them. He heard her go into her own room.

Carefully as Jörgen chose his words in communicating the result of their expedition, it was a sad disappointment to the old people. It was inexplicable to them both, but especially to Mrs. Dawes, who thought the decision arrived at cruel. Mary was to spend the long winter alone here, and Jörgen in Stockholm. They might possibly see each other for a few days at Christmas, but that would be all. Curiously enough, the old people's disappointment reacted upon Jörgen. He sat moping like a sick bird, had nothing to

say, hardly answered Mrs. Dawes when she spok to him, and presently went off to prepare for his departure next morning. His leave had expired, and he was going direct to Stockholm.

Mary alone was in good spirits. One would have supposed that she had no concern whatever in the matter. To her the day had, to all appearance, brought no disappointment. The triumphant mood in which she had been ever since she graciously proclaimed their engagement in her father's room, far from having abated, was more pronounced than ever. She went humming about the rooms and passages, and seemed to have no end of arrangements to make, as if it were she who was about to take an important and long journey. At supper she joked and teased until Jörgen began to have an uncomfortable suspicion that she was making fun of him. At last he said plainly that he could not understand her. He thought she ought rather to be sorry for him. She was to remain here in her own comfortable home, working for those whom she loved, whilst he——. Now he *hated* what he was going back to, because it took him away from her! He repented his exchange into the diplomatic service. He loathed Stockholm. He knew what an inferior position a young man occupied there who had no good introductions, and who, in

addition to this, was Norwegian. He was, in short, unhappy, and grumbled freely.

"You who distinguished yourself in the confirmation class, Jörgen, don't you know that Jacob had to work seven whole years for Rachel?"

"And how many have I not worked for you, Mary?"

"Ah! the reason of that is that you began far too early. It's a bad habit you have acquired—that of beginning too early."

"Was it possible to see you without . . .? You are unjust to yourself."

"You had other aims, Jörgen, besides winning me."

"So had that business-man, Jacob. And he had the advantage over me, that whilst working and waiting he could see Rachel as often as he liked."

"Well, well—he who has waited so many years, Jörgen, can surely wait half a year longer."

"It is easy for you to talk, you who have never waited—never for anything!"

Mary was silent.

"But that you should tease me into the bargain, Mary—I who, even when I am beside you, must exist on such meagre fare!"

"You think you have cause of complaint, Jörgen?"

"Yes, I do."

"You began far too early, remember!" And Mary laughed.

This put Jörgen out, but presently he repeated: "You don't understand what it means to wait."

"So much I do understand, that it comes easier to those who live on meagre fare." And she laughed again.

Jörgen was both offended and perplexed. A woman who really cared for him would hardly have behaved thus on the eve of parting from him for several months, and with such poor prospects as they had of being able to marry.

They sat for a short time beside her father, and longer beside Mrs. Dawes. Jörgen was quiet —hardly spoke. But Mary was gay. Mrs. Dawes watched them in surprise. Turning to Jörgen, she said: "Poor boy, you must come here at Christmas!" Mary answered for him: "Aunt Eva, it is just at Christmas that Stockholm is pleasantest."

Suddenly Mary rose and very unexpectedly said good-night, first to Jörgen, then to Mrs. Dawes.

"I am tired after the walk, and I must be up early to-morrow to see Jörgen off."

Jörgen felt that this sudden departure was a piece of deliberate mischief. She wished to escape saying good-night to him in the passage. He vowed to revenge himself. He was skilled in the art.

Mrs. Dawes asked if there were any misunderstanding beween them. He said there was none. She did not believe it; he had to assure her again solemnly that he knew of none. But he could not conceal that he was out of temper; he could not even bear to sit there any longer. When he left he found the passage, contrary to custom, dark, and had to grope his way to his own door. Not till he had lit his lamp and listened involuntarily for any sound from Mary's room, did it occur to him that the door-handle had been made noiseless. In the morning it had creaked—very little; but it certainly had creaked. Never had he been in such a well-ordered house as this, where the very slightest thing amiss was instantly put right—even on a Sunday. He could not imagine greater happiness than to return here when everything should be satisfactorily arranged, to rest, and to live as long as he chose in the manner which his ardent desire for the pleasures of the senses pictured.

Therefore patience! He would submit to Mary's

caprices now, as he had submitted to his uncle's before—until his time came!

He was undressing, when the door opened noiselessly, and Mary entered, in her night-dress —dazzlingly beautiful. She closed the door behind her and went forward to the lamp. "You shall not wait, Jörgen," said she, as she extinguished the light.

ALONE

NEXT morning she slept too long. She was awakened by singing and playing. First as in a dream and then consciously, through a rushing stream of memories, she heard Jörgen Thiis. He was at the piano, singing in the freshness of the early morning, the windows flung open, his clear, jubilant tenor wafting festal tones up to her.

In a moment she was up and dressing, afraid lest she might be too late to go down with him to the steamer. The wider awake she became with the rapid motion, the more impetuously did her thoughts rush towards him and his joyful agitation. That heartfelt, soul and sense pervading gratitude and praise—she would fain enjoy it in his immediate neighbourhood. She longed to be uplifted and borne in triumph as his life's queen! Of her sovereign grace she had bestowed on him life's highest prize. He was rewarded now for his long sufferings!—without bargaining, without regard for established prejudices. She knew him now; she knew exactly how he would look,

exactly in what manner he would make her the partaker of his happiness. Therefore her breast heaved high in expectation of the meeting—expectation of his gratitude and homage.

In her blue morning dress she passed through the little Dutch ante-room and stretched out her hand to open the door of the big drawing-room with the windows to the sea; but so excited was she that she had to pause to take breath—enjoying Jörgen's triumph the while. He was so carried away with his own music that she was quite close to him before he noticed her. He looked up, radiant—rose slowly, silently, as to a festal rite. This impression he would do nothing to destroy. He opened his arms, drew her into his embrace, kissed her hair gently, stroked the cheek that lay bare—slowly, protectingly. He was trying to shield, to hide, to help her with manly tenderness to overcome the feeling of shame from which she must be suffering. His whole attitude was tender and reassuring.

"But we must hurry in to breakfast now," he whispered affectionately, kissing her beautiful hair again, and inhaling its fragrance. Then he passed his arm gently, yet in a controlling manner, round her waist. Near the door he said in a low tone: "You have slept well, since you come so

late?" He opened the door with his disengaged hand, and, receiving no answer, looked sympathisingly at her. She was pale and confused. "My sweet one!" he whispered soothingly.

At breakfast there was no end to his consideration for her, especially when it became evident that she could not eat. But time was short; he had to attend to himself; so he could not talk much. Mary did not say a word. But it struck her that Jörgen handled his knife and fork in a new, masterful manner, of a piece with that in which he now spoke to her and looked at her. He evidently desired to inspire her with courage —after what had happened last night. She could have taken her plate with what was on it and flung it in his face!

His triumphal song had been in his own honour! He had been hymning his own worthiness!

A decanter with wine stood on the table. Jörgen poured out a large glass, drank it slowly, and rose with a dignified: "Excuse me!" adding in the doorway: "I must look if the boy has taken my portmanteau."

In a moment he was back again. "Time is almost up." He closed the door, and hurried across the room to Mary, who was now standing

at the window. This time he drew her quickly into his arms and began to kiss.

"No more of that, please!" she said with all her old queenliness, and turned away from him. She walked proudly into the hall, put on her coat with the assistance of the maid who hastened to help, chose a hat, looked out to see the state of the weather, and then took her parasol. The maid opened the front door. Mary passed out quickly, Jörgen following, mortally offended. He was unconscious of any transgression.

They walked on for a time silent. But Mary was in such a state of suppressed rage that when she at last remembered to put up her parasol, she almost broke it. Jörgen saw this.

"Remember," she said—and it sounded as if she had suddenly acquired a new voice—"I don't care about letters. And I can't write letters."

"You don't wish me to write to you?" He had also a new voice.

She did not answer, nor did she look at him.

"But if anything should happen—?" said he.

"Well, of course then—! But you forget that you have Mrs. Dawes."

And as if this were not enough, she added: "I don't imagine that you, either, are a good letter-writer, Jörgen. So there will be nothing lost."

He could have struck her.

As ill luck would have it, the surly old Lapland dog was at the landing-place with his master. No sooner did he catch sight of Jörgen than he began to bark. All his master's attempts to silence him were in vain.

Every one turned to look at the new-comers. Jörgen had at once picked up a small stone, and Mary had asked him in a low voice not to throw it. The steamer was now lying to; it diverted the attention of all, including the dog. For this moment Jörgen had been waiting; he flung the stone with all his might, and a loud howl arose. He immediately turned to Mary, swept off his hat with his best smile, and thanked her for the hospitality shown him.

For the sake of appearances she could not but remain on the pier until the steamer went; she was even obliged to wave her parasol once or twice. Smiling and triumphant, Jörgen returned sweeping bows from the steamer's deck.

How furious she was! But he was hardly less so.

"He, who should have thrown himself in the dust before me, and kissed the hem of my dress!" This was Mary's feeling.

She had had a dawning suspicion last night of a want of delicacy in her lover. He would not let her go. She had had to resort to artifice, and had been obliged to lock her door. But she had explained his behaviour to herself as an unfortunate result of those years of longing which had turned his passion into a morbid possession.

Now uncertainty was no longer possible! Only an "experienced hand" could behave like this. She had been deceived! The very best that was in her, fostered and guarded by her noblest instincts, had been led loathsomely astray.

With this thought she wrestled and strove all day long. She called herself betrayed, dishonoured. At first she thrust the blame away from herself. Then she took it all upon herself, and pronounced herself unworthy to live. She did nothing but make mistakes; she was her own betrayer! One hour she said to herself: "Violence was done me, although I gave myself to him voluntarily!" The next she said: "All this has its beginning farther back, and I cannot unravel it."

What a blessing that her own room remained undefiled! The one next it she would never enter again.

With Jörgen she would have nothing more to do! But would he in these circumstances keep silence?

She felt certain that he would. His faults did not lie in this direction—otherwise she, too, must have heard something. But that even one human being should exist who——! She wept with anger and impotence. It would break her spirit. It would weigh on her like an incubus—heaviest when she rose highest.

She would meet him! She would tell him what she had taken him for, and what he was—to whom she thought she was going that night and whom she found. He should not be able to boast! But to carry out this intention she must know something about his life. Whom dared she ask? who knew?

When she awoke next morning, her mind was clearer—clearer in the first place as to how she must proceed in acquiring information regarding Jörgen. It must be gathered as opportunity offered, so that no one's attention should be attracted. It was also clear to her that the breach with him, and the meeting which was to prepare it, must be postponed—chiefly for the sake of the old people. But her second and much more important resolve was to restore the equilibrium of her own life, to escape from the unhealthy atmosphere which had been her undoing. This could be done in only one way; she must take

up her work again, fit herself to do it better, and gain new courage by success.

Work and duty! She raised herself on her elbow, as if imitating the corresponding uplifting of her mind. The next moment she was out of bed, preparing to begin.

The 50,000 kroner which her father had given to Uncle Klaus, and of which she had found no record in his books—did they not indicate that he probably had money in America over and above that which had been in his brother's business? that the interest which he had not spent had been invested there? that 50,000 kroner of capital had lately been paid up and sent home?

Ever since Jörgen had told her about these 50,000 kroner, the thought of them had been haunting her. Now she must examine her father's American correspondence; they must be mentioned in it. But no American letters could she find, until she opened a small box which was shoved under a book-shelf, and the key of which she found in her father's purse. She remembered that this box had accompanied them on their travels, but she had never known what it contained. In it lay the American correspondence and accounts. It seemed as if, ever since her

mother's days, he had kept this American part of his fortune, and everything relating to it, separate from the rest. And a very considerable sum he must still own over there, even although the principal part, the million, was lost. Mary became quite excited. Her father had undoubtedly understood from the fatal letter that everything he possessed in America was lost; and she and the others had received the same impression.

She now went to her father's room, explained things carefully to him, and said that she intended to go to America at once to investigate the matter. He was startled, but soon recognised the necessity of the step, and agreed to it.

Mrs. Dawes was not so confiding. She felt that there was something wrong, and that Mary was seeking distraction. But Mary's manner in telling of her discovery and intention was quite determined. Therefore the old lady confined herself to a gentle reminder of the gales likely to be encountered at this season.

Three days later Mary, with an English-speaking maid, was on her way to America, confident, as she had assured her father, of finding some one among her many acquaintances capable of giving her the assistance she required.

Everything happened as she had hoped, and in six weeks she was home again. It was fortunate that she had gone out when she did, for proceedings were on the point of being taken on the assumption that Anders Krog had been his brother's full partner, whereas his partnership was limited to the amount which he had invested in the business. This Mary was in a position to prove.

Her business success inspired her with courage. Why not go on? She had capital at her disposal now with which to commence operations. She felt very much inclined to try. And the timber trade too! Was she not as capable as any one of learning it? Was book-keeping by double-entry so very difficult? She set to work at once.

Anders Krog seemed to revive after his daughter's return. The certainty that the money which had not been in his brother's business was saved gave him the greatest satisfaction. Mary's future was his one thought.

Mrs. Dawes, on the contrary, became visibly worse. It seemed as if the once active, indefatigable woman had no strength left to draw upon. She did not even ask after Jörgen; her correspondence she had quite given up.

Mary managed the property with the assistance

of the overseer, and her father's money with the aid of a lawyer. She took lessons and studied. Twice a week she went to town.

The time passed thus until the beginning of November. Then Anders Krog received a letter from a near relation in Christiania, whose only child, a daughter, had just become engaged. He was particularly anxious that Mary should come and take part in the festivities to be held on this occasion. Several entertainments were to be given by both families concerned.

Mary was surprised at the pleasure with which the prospect suddenly filled her. The old Adam was not dead! She hummed cheerfully as she went about the house making her preparations. She was longing for new surroundings—and for new homage! It was as reparation she desired it; this she was obliged to confess to herself.

She had not been in Christiania many days before Anders received a letter proclaiming her praises in the strongest words in the language. It was not the engaged couple, but Mary, who attracted most attention at the balls; it was she who was distinguished and fêted—the young couple themselves being amongst her most devoted admirers! Her unique style of beauty, her charm of

manner, her accomplishments, her tact, had made an indelible impression upon them all. They must be allowed to keep her a little longer.

Anders Krog sent the letter in to Mrs. Dawes, with the request that it should be returned soon. He spent most of the day reading it.

Next morning Mary came home. She went upstairs quietly to her father's room. He was shocked with her look. She was ill, she said; and this was plainly visible. She was not pale, but grey; her eyes were heavy with sleep, her voice was faint. She embraced her father long and tenderly, but would neither look at his letter nor tell him about her visit. She must go to bed and rest, she told him, as soon as she had seen Mrs. Dawes.

She did not stay half a minute with Mrs. Dawes, whom she left terribly anxious.

She slept all day, ate a little at supper-time, and slept again all night.

When she got up she looked much as usual, and was active and interested in everything. Overseer, gardener, and housekeeper came with their reports, and she went her usual rounds. Then she made her father happy again by coming smiling into his room.

She had come to tell him that there was nothing

now to prevent her marrying at once. They would be quite well enough off. Her father managed with great difficulty to say that he had been thinking the same himself. His eyes and the one hand said more, namely, that nothing would please him better.

But when she told Mrs. Dawes, and added that she thought of going at once to Stockholm to propose it (Jörgen's name was not mentioned), Mrs. Dawes's usual perspicacity returned; she sat up in bed and began to weep bitterly. Then Mary's courage failed her; she threw herself on the bed and whispered: "It's only too true, Aunt Eva!" She wept as she had never wept in her life before. But as Mrs. Dawes's agitation was increased by this, she was obliged to raise her head and say: "Aunt Eva, dear, Father will hear us!" This subdued them a little. Then Mrs. Dawes told, through her tears, that this was her own story over again. Not until after her fiancé had induced her to go the same length did she discover what a despicable man he was.

"Then we were obliged to marry. You see now, child, what we women are; we never learn."

"Oh, if only you and Father had not insisted on bringing this man into my life!" moaned Mary.

"My instinct warned me to keep him at a distance, but you deadened it." She added at once: "No, don't take it like that, Aunt Eva! I am not reproaching you and Father. Besides, there's no use in complaining now. There is only one thing to be done—to shut my eyes and take the plunge."

In this Mrs. Dawes entirely agreed with her. "Afterwards you will do as I did; when your reputation is saved, you will separate from him."

"No, that I shall not do. There will be something then that will bind us together. Good God! good God!" she moaned, clinging to her old friend and smothering her cry in the bed-clothes.

Mrs. Dawes sat helpless, holding her. "I don't understand this," she said.

Mary raised her head quickly: "Do you not understand? He did it on purpose to bind me. He knew me."

Then she threw herself across the bed again, miserable, despairing. Between her outbursts of weeping came the cry: "There is no way out of it! no way out of it!"

Mrs. Dawes had neither the strength nor the courage to seek for words to comfort such distress.

It took its free course, until the anger cooled. Mrs. Dawes could feel that another emotion

was gradually taking the upper hand. Mary raised her head; in her eyes, red with weeping, was hatred.

"I thought that I was giving myself to a gentleman; I discovered that it was to a speculator." She rose slowly.

"Will you say that to him, child?"

"Most certainly not! Nothing whatever to that effect. I shall merely say that it is necessary we should marry."

Three days later a letter was brought in to Jörgen Thiis at the Foreign Office. It was from Mary. "I am at the Grand Hotel, and expect you to meet me there, outside the entrance, at two o'clock punctually."

He understood at once what this implied, and hurried off, for it was now a quarter to two. It did not strike him until he was on his way downstairs that their meeting was to be "outside the entrance"!

She did not wish to be alone with him in her room.

This altered his intentions. He ran up to his rooms and released from imprisonment a little black poodle puppy, a valuable animal, which he was training.

The middle of the road was filthy with slush and mud, and the dog was at once ordered to keep beside his master on the pavement, which was clean. After a few sprightly excursions he became obedient; he was afraid of Jörgen's thin cane.

Mary's erect figure was distinguishable from a long distance. She stood with her back to them, looking in the direction of the palace. Jörgen's heart beat violently; his courage was failing him.

Mary became aware of his approach by the dog's rushing up to her as to an old friend. She loved dogs; nothing but her constant change of abode had prevented her keeping one. And this was such a beautiful, healthy, well-kept animal, so entirely to her taste in every way, that she involuntarily bent down to take notice of him. As she did so she saw Jörgen. She drew herself up again at once.

"Is this your dog?" she asked, as if they had parted half an hour ago.

"Yes," answered he, taking off his hat respectfully.

Then she bent down again and patted the dog: "What a beauty you are! a real beauty! No—keep down!"

"Keep down!" came in a more peremptory tone from Jörgen.

Mary straightened herself again. "Where shall we go?" she asked. "I have never been in Stockholm before."

"We may as well go straight on. If we take the turning yonder we shall come to John Ericson's monument."

"Yes, I should like to see that." They walked on.

"Come here!" called Jörgen to the dog, indicating the spot with his stick. He was offended by Mary's not even having offered him her hand. The dog came dejectedly, but cheered up immediately, for Mary spoke to him and patted him again.

"I have been over in America," she said.

"Yes, I heard that."

"The 50,000 kroner of which you spoke were not in my father's books, which made me certain that he must keep a separate account of the money in America. This account I found. It showed me the necessity for going across and saving what could be saved. The main sum was, of course, hopelessly lost."

"What success had you?"

"I brought home with me the accumulated interest of all these years."

"The money had been well invested?"

"Better, I believe, than it could have been in Europe."

Here followed a short intermezzo. The dog had been off the pavement, and now received a few cuts with the cane. This made Mary indignant.

"Dear me! the dog doesn't understand."

"Yes, he understands perfectly; but he has not learned to obey."

They walked on quickly. "What is your intention in telling me this?" asked Jörgen.

"To show you that we can marry at once."

"How much is there?"

"About two hundred thousand."

"Dollars?"

"No, kroner. And the 50,000 besides."

"It is not enough."

"Along with the rest?"

"The 'rest' is hardly yielding anything at present. That you know."

Mary began to feel ill. He knew it by her voice when she said: "We have the timber to fall back upon."

"Which cannot be felled for three years; possibly not for four, or even five? That depends entirely on its growth."

Mary knew that he was right. Why had she mentioned it? "But—ten to twelve thousand kroner a year . . . ?"

"Is not enough in our position."

Another intermezzo. There was no pavement here. They had come to a large, open space, thick with mud. Both had forgotten the dog. A fat, dirty ship-dog, also of the poodle tribe, had come on shore with some sailors, who were sauntering along in the same direction as Mary and Jörgen. With this welcome playfellow Jörgen's dog had joined company. Jörgen had the greatest trouble in inducing him to come back—dirty as he already was. As soon as Mary called too, he came boldly and joyfully. But a stroke with the cane awaited him, and called forth a howl.

"It is strange," said Mary, "that you cannot treat a nice dog kindly!" She was thinking of his cruelty to their neighbour's old Lapland dog.

Jörgen did not answer. But as soon as he felt sure that the dog was following meekly, he said: "Does Uncle Klaus know anything about this money?"

"I do not believe that any one knows about it except ourselves. Why do you ask?"

"Because it will be our best plan to speak to Uncle Klaus."

Mary stood still, astonished. "To Uncle Klaus?"

Jörgen also stood still. They looked at each other now.

"It will be to our interest," continued Jörgen.

"With Uncle Klaus——?" Mary stared. She did not understand him.

"For the sake of the family's honour he will do a great deal," said Jörgen, giving her a quick side-glance as he moved on.

She had turned ghastly white, but she followed. "Must we confide in Uncle Klaus?" she whispered behind him. A lower depth of humiliation there could not be.

"Yes, we'll do so!" he answered encouragingly, almost gaily. "Now he will not say 'No'!"

Had this, too, entered into his calculations?

He went closer to her. "If Uncle Klaus knows nothing about the American money, we shall get more—do you see?"

How well he had thought it all out! In spite of her disgust, Mary was impressed. Jörgen was a cleverer man than she had taken him for. Once he had the opportunity to develop all his gifts, he would surprise many besides herself.

She walked along, shrinking into herself like a leaf in too dry heat.

"You will manage this with Uncle Klaus yourself?"

"I shall go back with you now, as you may suppose. You need not have come. You had only to let me know."

Her head was bent and she was trembling. His superiority robbed her of her strength and courage; his words sickened her. As on a previous occasion, one foot refused to plant itself in front of the other; she could follow no farther.

Then she heard Jörgen call: "Come here, you little devil!" The dog again! His dirty scamp of a playfellow had once more tempted him from the path of duty.

There was something peculiar about Jörgen's voice when it commanded—it was subdued and sharp at the same time. The dog recognised it, but only looked round, irresolute. Being endowed with a happy frivolity of disposition, he rushed again merrily up to his comrade and went on with the game as if nothing had been said.

Mary stood learning a lesson. It was just underneath John Ericson's statue that this happened. She looked up at the statue, looked into John Ericson's kind, thoughtful eyes, until tears filled her own. She was utterly miserable.

Jörgen was engrossed with the dog. The animal's education was conducted on the principle that he must never be allowed to have his own will when it conflicted with his master's. "Come here, you little rogue," said Jörgen ingratiatingly. The dog was so surprised that he stopped in the middle of his game. "Good dog! come along!" He made one or two joyful bounds in Jörgen's direction; he remembered the good times they had had together—perhaps such a time awaited him now. But, whatever the reason, doubt seized him—he turned back and was soon between his dirty friend's paws again, both of them sprawling in the mud.

The passers-by stopped, amused by the animal's disobedience. This annoyed Jörgen. Mary knew it, and made an attempt to save the dog. Standing behind Jörgen, she said softly in French: "It is not fair first to coax and then to strike." Her words only made him more obstinate. "This is a matter you don't understand," he answered, also in French, and continued coaxing.

With the short-sighted trustfulness common to sweet-tempered puppies, the dog stopped in his game and looked at Jörgen. Jörgen, with his stick behind his back, advanced persuasively. He was furious at the laughter of

the onlookers, but muffled his rage in soft words. "Come on, old fellow, come on!"

"Don't believe him!" shouted an English sailor. But it was too late. Jörgen had hold of one of the long ears. The dog howled; Jörgen must have pinched hard. Mary called in French: "Don't beat him!" Jörgen struck—not hard; but the terrified puppy yelled piercingly. He struck again—not hard this time either; it was done chiefly to annoy them all. The dog howled so pitifully that Mary could not bear to look in that direction. Gazing into John Ericson's good, kind eyes, she said: "These blows have separated you and me, Jörgen!"

Instantaneously he let the dog go and stood up. He saw her eyes flame; her cheeks were white; she held herself erect and faced him—above her John Ericson's head.

A moment later, and she had turned her back on him and was walking quickly away, with light, glad steps—the dog following.

The onlookers laughed, the English sailors derisively; Jörgen started in pursuit.

But when Mary saw that the dog was following her and not him, and that the creature's eyes sought hers to learn what she inten ed to do, the fear she had felt before turned into wild

exhilaration. Such revulsions of feeling were not uncommon with her. She clapped her hands and ran, and the dog sprang along at her side, barking. The spell was broken, the disgrace was cast from her! Farewell to Jörgen and all his ways!

"That's what we are saying, my little rescuer, eh?" The dog barked.

She looked round to see Jörgen. He dared not hurry, for the sake of appearances.

"But we two dare, don't we?" Again she clapped her hands and ran, and the dog ran with her, barking.

Then she slackened her pace, and played with him and talked to him; Jörgen was so far behind. "You ought to be called 'liberator'; but that is too long a name for a little black puppy. You shall be called John—be named after him who looked at me and gave me courage." Off she and the dog ran again. "You follow me and not him! Well done, well done! That is what he whom you are called after did. He would have nothing to do with the slave-drivers; his friends were those who set free!"

Now they were round the corner. Jörgen was not visible. When he came to the hotel, he was told, though he had seen Mary go in, that she was not at home. He said that she had his dog. The waiter professed ignorance. There

was nothing for it but to go. He had lost both her and the dog.

Up in her room Mary asked the dog: "Will you be mine? Will you go with me, little black John?" She clapped her hands to make him bark his joyful: Yes. The question of ownership was settled thus. A letter which came from Jörgen, probably on this subject, she burned unread.

She expected him to appear at the station, at the time when the train for Norway left, to claim his property. She drove boldly up with her dog at her side, washed, combed, perfumed. Jörgen was not there.

Mary slept all night with the dog at her feet, on her travelling rug.

But with morning came reflection. Now she was alone, alone with the responsibility.

Hitherto she had been forcing herself into the one narrow way of escape—to marry Jörgen at once, bear her child abroad, and after that—endure as long as she could.

But to marry the man she loathed, merely in order to save her good name—how inconceivable such a step now seemed to her! She had tried to take it, because she knew what those around her thought on such subjects, and

because she occupied a peculiar position; upon festal garments a stain was unendurable.

But now she said "For shame!" at the thought of it—said it aloud. And the dog instantly looking up, she added: "Yes, John, it was 'to the dogs' I was going when I set off on this journey!"

But what was she to do now?

She knew what could be done. But two besides herself would be in that secret—Jörgen and another. This in itself was prohibitive. She could never again hold up her head proudly and independently—and to be able to do so was a necessity to her.

Well, what then?

As long as her journey and what it entailed had seemed to her to be imperative, for honour's sake inevitable, the idea of the last, the very last refuge had not suggested itself seriously.

Now it faced her in sad earnest!

She looked mournfully into the dog's honest eyes, as if she were searching for a way of escape from this too. She read in them the most unmixed happiness and devotion. Burying her face in his curls, she wept. She was so young still, she did not want to die.

For the first time she wept for herself, was sorry for herself. It did not seem to her

that she had done anything to deserve this. Nor could she account to herself for the manner in which it had all come about.

The dog understood that she was unhappy. He licked her hands, looked up into her face, and whined to be allowed to jump up and comfort her.

She lifted him up and bent over him. Imagining that she meant to play with him, he began to snap at her hands. She let him have his way, and the two were soon engaged in a merry, babyish game, which lasted a long time, because John refused to be satisfied; every time she stopped, he began again.

Then she talked to him. "Little black John, you remind me of the negroes. You remind me that your namesake ransomed negroes from slavery. You have saved me from being enslaved. But it is a sorry deliverance, I can tell you, if I am not to have the right to live as well as you. Don't you think so too?" Then she began to cry again.

In Christiania she drove from one station to the other wearing a thick veil, the dog beside her on the seat. She saw none of her acquaintances. If they knew——!

Oh, that condemned and executed crow, which

Jörgen wanted to pick up and she fled from—she had no idea how well she had seen it, seen the torn neck, the hacked body, the empty eye-sockets! The red wounds gaped at her; she could not get them out of her thoughts during this terrible drive.

It was winter now. She had not seen winter for many years. Dying, withered vegetation she had seen, but not winter's transforming power, not desolation decked in the fairest, purest white, with capricious variations where the landscape was wooded. The fjord was not yet ice-covered; steel-grey, defiant, hard, the sea came rolling up from every direction, like a hydra-headed monster challenging to combat.

Her imagination had been excited by the drive through the town; now the powers of nature took possession of it. All the more intensely did she feel her impotence. Could *she* accept any challenge to combat? Would *she* ever know the period of transformation? For her there was no course open but to die.

Whilst she was wrestling with these thoughts she suddenly saw her father's face. How could she live without telling him what was impending? And never, never would she be able to tell him! She could not even let him know that she had

broken off her engagement. This alone would be more than he could bear.

What if, instead of speaking, she were to disappear? Good God! that would kill him at once.

During the rest of the journey she felt no more fear of others, none whatever for herself—it was all for him, for him alone!

She arrived in such an exhausted and miserable condition that she began to cry when she saw the house. There can have been few sadder walks than hers up to it. Even the dog's joyful antics when he reached firm ground could not distract her. She went straight to her own room to wash and change her dress, requesting that her father and Mrs. Dawes should be told of her arrival. Little Nanna went with her, to help her. The child played with the dog whenever she had an unoccupied moment; this annoyed Mary, but she said nothing.

She looked utterly worn-out, and it was only too evident that she had wept. But perhaps this was fortunate. Her father would understand at once that all was not well. If he were only able to bear it! She would tell him that she had had a long, fatiguing journey, and that Jörgen did not consider the means at their disposal sufficient

for people in their position to marry upon. They must wait and see what Uncle Klaus would do.

If she cried—and she was sure to cry, so tired and heart-broken was she—it would prepare him for what was to follow. Oh, if he were only able to bear it!

But what else could she do? If she did not go to him at once he would suspect mischief, and feel alarmed, and that would be quite as bad for him.

She trembled as she stood at his door. Not only from anxiety for him—no, also because she must not throw herself down beside him, tell him everything, and weep till she could weep no more. How dreadful it all was!

But life is sometimes merciful!

Anders had not been told of his daughter's arrival, because he was asleep. The nurse had waited in the passage to let Mary know this when she came out of her room. Why did the woman not knock at the door and tell her? Simply because it was not natural to her to act thus. However, when Mary did come out, she was no longer in the passage, but half way downstairs. One of the servants was carrying up the invalid's dinner. The nurse, distressed at being unable to do this herself as usual, had thought that she would at least take it from her on the stairs.

Whilst she was doing this, Mary opened the door of her father's room. She stood still in the doorway, because the nurse, who had hastened up again, was whispering: "He is asleep, Miss Krog."

But the dog, understanding nothing, was in the room already, already had his paws on the edge of the bed and his face close to the face of the sick man, who was awaking—who awoke, with this black apparition staring into his eyes. The eyes opened wide with terror, gazed round the room, and met Mary's. She stood in the doorway, horror-struck, pale as death. Her father raised his head towards her; then the eyes became fixed and a far-away look came into them. The head sank back.

"He is dying!" cried the nurse behind Mary, setting down the tray and rushing forwards.

Mary would not believe it at first; but when she understood that it was true, she threw herself upon him with a heartrending scream. It was answered by one from Mrs. Dawes in the next room. The servants who hurried there found her lying unconscious. She recovered sufficiently to be able to stammer some unintelligible English words. The doctor said: "It will soon be all over with her too." Anders Krog was dead.

Mary clung to her reason as if she were grasping it with her hands. She must not, must not give way —must not scream, must not think. *She* had not killed him! She must listen to and remember what the others said, must give her consent to what they were proposing, which was to send for her father's sister. When she witnessed that sister's grief, she felt that she must not give way to her own. She must not, must not! "Help me, help me," she cried, "that I may not go mad!" And, turning to the doctor, she said: "*I* did not kill him, did I?"

The doctor ordered her to bed, prescribed cold compresses, and remained beside her. He, too, impressed on her the necessity of self-control.

Not till little Nanna brought the dog to her next morning, and the animal insisted on being taken into her arms, was she able to shed tears.

During the course of the day she improved a little. Her grief was alleviated by the heartfelt sympathy, often expressed in the most moving terms, which was conveyed to her by the numberless telegrams that arrived in town and were telephoned from there. All this sympathy for herself, admiration for her father, and intense desire to comfort and strengthen her, helped her greatly. From the incautious manner in

which one of these telegrams was transmitted she learned that Mrs. Dawes, too, was dead. They had not dared to tell her. But the great and general sympathy helped her to bear this also. Now she understood how it was so great and general. Every one but herself knew that she had lost both, that she was alone in the world.

The message which touched her most came from Paris, and was as follows: "My beloved Mary,—Can it comfort you in your great sorrow to know that there is a resting-place here for you, and that I am at your service—to travel with you, to come to you, to do whatever you wish!—Yours unalterably, ALICE."

She knew who had sent Alice intimation.

Jörgen, too, telegraphed. "If I could be of the slightest service or comfort to you I would come at once. I am broken-hearted."

The same touching, reverential sympathy was shown on the occasion of the funeral, which was hastened on Mary's account, and took place three days after the deaths. Amongst the countless wreaths, the most beautiful of all was Alice's. It was taken up to Mary—she wished to see it. The whole house was fragrant with flowers on that winter day, their sweet

breath a message of love to those who slept there.

Mary did not go downstairs ; she refused to see the coffins, or the flowers, or any of the preparations that had been made for the entertainment of friends who came from a distance.

More people came than the house could hold, and at the chapel there was a still larger gathering.

The clergyman asked if he might go upstairs and see Miss Krog. Mary sent him her best thanks, but declined the visit.

Immediately afterwards little Nanna came to ask if she would see Uncle Klaus. The old man had sent her a very touching telegram, in which he asked if he could not be of service to her in any way. And his wreath was so magnificent that, after hearing the servants' description of it, Mary had made them bring it, too, for her to look at.

She now answered: Yes. And in came the tall man, in deep mourning, gasping as if he had difficulty in breathing. No sooner did he see Mary standing by the bed, a figure of ivory draped in black, than he sank on to the first chair he could reach, and burst into loud weeping. The sound resembled what is heard when the

mainspring of a large clock breaks, and the whole machinery unreels itself. It was the weeping of a man who had not wept since he was a child—a sound alarmed at itself. He did not look up.

But he had an errand, so much Mary understood. He tried twice to speak, but the attempt only increased the violence of the weeping fit. Then, motioning despairingly, he rose and left the room. He did not shut the door, and she heard him sobbing as he went along the passage and downstairs, to go straight home.

Mary was deeply touched. She knew that her father had been the old man's best, perhaps his only friend. But she understood that it was not for him alone the tears had been shed; they told also of sympathy with her, and of remorse. Had it not been so, Uncle Klaus would have stayed beside the coffin.

The sweet-toned chapel bell began to toll. The dog, which had been kept prisoner in Mary's room all day, and was very restless, rushed to the window towards the sea, and put his fore-paws up on the sill, to look out. Mary followed him.

At that moment Uncle Klaus drove off. The singing of a psalm began in the rooms below, and

the funeral procession issued from the house. The coffins were carried by the peasants from the neighbouring farms. When the first came in sight, Mary fell on her knees and wept as if her heart would break. She saw no more.

She flung herself across the bed. The strokes of the bell seemed to cut into her flesh; she imagined that she felt the stripes they raised. Her mind became more and more confused. She was certain now that her father, when he caught sight of her in the doorway, had guessed the truth, and that this had killed him. Mrs. Dawes had followed him, as she always did. Her love for Anders Krog was the one great love of her life. They were both here now. And Mary's mother, too, was in the room, in a long white robe. "You are cold, child!" she said, and took her into her arms—for Mary had become a child again, a little innocent child. She fell asleep.

When she awoke and heard no sound, outside the house or in, she folded her hands and said, half aloud: "This was best for us, for all three. We have been mercifully dealt with."

She looked round for the dog; she craved for sympathy. But some one must have taken him away whilst she was asleep.

No more was needed to make the tears flow

again. Welling forth from the inexhaustible fountain of grief within, they poured down her cheeks and over the hands with which she was supporting her heavy head.

"Now I can begin to think of myself again. I am alone now."

THE CRISIS

WHEN Mary was visiting the graves next day, her grief was distracted by the following little occurrence.

It was Saturday, and the eve of one of the few Sundays in the year when service was held in the chapel. On such occasions it was customary to decorate the graves. As the farm to the right of Krogskogen had once formed part of that estate, its owners had their burial-place here. The peasant's wife had come with flowers to deck a new grave, and the old Lapland dog was with her. Mary's little poodle at once rushed at him fearlessly, and to the woman's and Mary's surprise the old dog, after cautious and minute inspection, made friends with the giddy youngster. Though he as a rule could not bear puppies, he quite fell in love with this one. He allowed his ears to be pulled and his legs to be bitten; he even laid himself down and pretended to be vanquished. This delighted Mary so much that she accompanied the woman part of the way home,

to watch the game. And she was more than repaid for so doing. She heard warm praise of her father, and some of the anecdotes of him that were circulating in the neighbourhood at this time, and were ensuring him an honoured memory.

She thought as she walked home with her excited dog: "Am I beginning to resemble Mother? Has there always been in me something of her which until now has not had room to develop; something of her simple nature?"

This day brought two surprises.

The first was a letter from Uncle Klaus. He addressed her as: "My honoured and dear god-daughter, Miss Mary Krog." She had had no idea that she was his god-daughter; her father had never told her, probably did not know it himself.

Uncle Klaus wrote: "There are feelings which are too strong for words, especially for written words. I am no letter-writer; but I take the liberty of intimating to you in this manner, since I was unable to do it by word of mouth, that on the day when your father, my best friend, and Mrs. Dawes, your revered foster-mother, died, and you were left alone, I made you, my dear god-daughter, my heiress.

"My fortune is not nearly so large as is generally supposed; I have had great losses of

late. But there is still enough for us both—that is to say, if your share is under your own management *and not Jörgen's*. I write on the supposition that you will now marry.

"Mrs. Dawes's will has been in my hands for many years, and I have had charge of her money. I opened the will yesterday. She has left everything to you. This means about 60,000 kroner. But the same holds good of this money as of your father's; it is for the moment yielding almost no interest. "Your godfather,

"KLAUS KROG."

Mary answered at once:

"MY DEAR GODFATHER,—Your letter has touched me deeply. I thank you with all my heart.

"But I dare not accept your generous gift.

"Jörgen is your adopted son, and on no account will I stand in his way.

"You must not be angry with me for this. I cannot possibly act differently.

"In the matter of Mrs. Dawes's will, I shall come to a decision ere long, and shall then write to you again. "Your grateful

"MARY KROG."

Whilst she was despatching this letter she

heard a carriage drive up, and presently a card was brought in to her, on which she read: "Dr. Margrete Röy."

It was a little time before Miss Röy came in. She had been taking off her wraps. It was a cold day. The delay increased Mary's excitement, with the result that she trembled and turned pale as the tall, strong woman with the kind eyes entered the room. She saw the impression made by this on the kind eyes, which now poured forth all their compassion upon her. As if they had known each other for many years, Mary went up to her visitor, laid her head on her shoulder, and wept. Margrete Röy pressed the unhappy girl affectionately to her breast.

After they had seated themselves, she told her errand, which was to inquire when Mary intended to go abroad. Mary asked in surprise: "Have I spoken to any one about that?"

Miss Röy said that she had heard it from the nurse.

"Oh!" said Mary, "I have no idea what I said in the state I was in at that time. I have certainly given the matter no thought since."

"Then you are not going abroad?"

Mary sat silent for a moment. "All I can say is that I don't know. I have not yet made any plans."

Margrete Röy was embarrassed. Mary saw this, or rather felt it. "You also have perhaps had thoughts of travelling!" she said.

"Yes, and I wanted to know if I could be of any use to you. I should be happy to arrange my journey so that we could travel together."

"Where are you going?"

"I am going abroad to study—Paris first. The nurse told me it was there you meant to go," said Margrete, beginning to feel very awkward. Her wish had been to help Mary, but it seemed to her now that she was intruding.

"I appreciate your kindness," said Mary. "It is possible that I mentioned Paris. I don't remember. The truth is that I have come to no decision."

"Please forgive me, then. The whole has been a misunderstanding," said Miss Röy, rising.

Mary felt that she must not let her go, but her strength seemed to fail her. It was not until Margrete had reached the door that she managed to say: "I am coming to speak to you one day soon, Miss Röy." She said it in a low voice, without looking up. "I am not well enough to do it to-day," she added.

"I can see that. It is only what I expected; so I brought something with me for you—if you will only take it. It is the most invigorating tonic I know."

Mary felt all her sympathies go out to this woman. She thanked her heartily, adding: "Then, as soon as I am a little stronger, I may come?"

"You will be very welcome."

"Perhaps," said Mary, blushing, "you would not mind coming to me?"

"To your house in the market-place?" asked Miss Röy.

"Yes, to our house in the market-place. Though I ought no longer to say 'our' house!" The tears came again.

"You have only to let me know, and I shall come at once."

A week later Mary went to town—in the wildest November storm, the worst they had had in these parts. The fjords were not yet frozen over, so the steamer managed to reach town, but had to remain there.

Margrete Röy was much astonished at being summoned on such a day. It was to a warm, comfortable house she came, not the deserted one with the drawn down blinds which she was accustomed to see. She was conducted up an old-fashioned broad stair; the whole interior was in the style of the old town-houses of the beginning of last century.

Mary was in the farthest away of the suite of sitting-rooms, a red boudoir, unchanged since her mother's day. She was sitting on a sofa, beneath a large portrait of her mother. When she stood up in her black dress, pale and heavy-eyed under her crown of red hair, it struck Margrete Röy that she was the very image of sorrow, the most beautiful one that could be imagined. A solemn tranquillity surrounded her. She spoke as low as the storm outside permitted.

"I feel that you respect another's grief. I am also certain that you betray no secrets."

"I do not."

A little time passed before Mary said: "Who is Jörgen Thiis?"

"Who is he——?"

"I have several reasons for believing that *you* can tell me."

"You must first allow me to put a question. Are you not engaged to Jörgen Thiis?"

"No."

"People say that you are."

Mary remained silent.

"You have perhaps been engaged to him?"

"Yes."

"But," said Margrete quickly and joyously, "you have broken off the engagement?"

Mary nodded.

"Many will rejoice to hear it; for Jörgen Thiis is not worthy of you."

Mary showed no signs of surprise.

"You know something?" she asked.

"Doctors, Miss Krog, know more than they may tell."

"Yet I do believe that he loved me," said Mary, to excuse herself.

"We all saw that," replied Margrete. "He undoubtedly loved you better than he had ever loved before. Nor was it surprising," she added. "But when I lived in Christiania I knew a sweet young girl who at that time was the one love of his life! She allowed herself to be deeply moved by this, and as they could not marry, she gave herself to him."

"What did she do?" asked Mary, startled. Had she understood aright? The storm was howling so loudly outside that it was difficult to hear.

Margrete repeated distinctly and impressively: "She was a warm-hearted girl, who believed that she was doing right, as she was his one and only love."

"They could not marry?"

"It was not possible. So she gave herself to him without marriage."

Mary started up, but did not move forward. She was going to say something, but stopped.

"Do not be so startled, Miss Krog. It is nothing very uncommon."

This information lowered Mary considerably in her own estimation. She slowly seated herself again.

"You cannot have had any experience of this sort of thing, Miss Krog?"

Mary shook her head.

"In which case it surprises me that you were able to escape from Jörgen Thiis in time; *he* has had plenty."

Mary made no reply.

"We expected, especially after your father and Mrs. Dawes both became invalids, that you would have been married before autumn."

"We intended to be, but it proved impossible."

Margrete could not fathom what lay beneath this enigmatic answer; but she said, with a searching glance: "This, doubtless, added very considerably to his ardour?"

Mary trembled inwardly, but controlled herself.

"You seem to know him?" she said.

Margrete reflected for a moment, then answered: "Yes. I am older than you, older than

Jörgen, too. But in Christiania I also, to my shame be it spoken, was infatuated with him. This he discovered—and tried to take advantage of." She laughed.

Mary turned pale, rose, and walked to the window. The wind was lashing the rain against the panes with ever-increasing force. She remained for a few moments gazing out into the storm, then came and stood in front of Margrete, agitated, restless.

"Will you promise me never to tell any one what we have spoken about to-day—under any circumstances whatever?"

Margrete looked at her in surprise. "You wish me to tell no one that you have asked me about Jörgen Thiis?"

"It is my express desire that no one should know it."

"Do you mean any one in particular?"

Mary looked at her. "Any one in particular?" She did not understand.

Margrete rose. "A man came to this town on purpose to tell you that Jörgen Thiis was not worthy of you. He came too late; but I think he deserves to know that you have discovered for yourself what Jörgen Thiis is."

Mary answered, eagerly: "Tell *him*. By all

means tell *him!* . . . So that was why he came," she added slowly. "I am glad that you have told me. Because my other reason for wishing to see you was—" she hesitated a little, "the other thing I wanted to ask you was—to give my kind remembrances to your brother."

"That I shall do, gladly. Thank you for the message. You know what you are to my brother."

Mary looked away. She struggled with herself a moment, then said: "I am one of the unhappy people who cannot understand their own lives—cannot understand what has happened. I can find no clue to it. But something tells me that your brother has had his share in it."

She evidently wished to say more, but could not. Instead, she returned to the window and remained standing there again. The storm without called into the room with its thousand-voiced wrath. It was calling her.

"What a terrible storm!" said Margrete, raising her voice.

"I am rejoicing at the thought of going out into it," said Mary, turning round with sparkling eyes.

"You are never going out in this weather!" exclaimed Margrete.

"I mean to walk home," answered Mary.

"To *walk?*"

Mary came forward and placed herself in front of Margrete, as if she were about to say something wild and dreadful. She stopped short, but what she had not said rushed into her eyes, into her whole face, to her heart. She flung up her arms and with a loud groan threw herself back on her mother's sofa, and covered her face with her hands.

Margrete knelt down beside her. Mary allowed her friend to put her arms round her and draw her to her like a tired, suffering child. And she began to cry, as a child cries, touchingly and helplessly; her head sank on to Margrete's shoulder.

But only for a moment; then she sat up with a sudden start. For Margrete had whispered into her ear: "There is something the matter with you. Speak to me."

Not a word came in answer. Margrete dared not say more. She rose; she felt that it was time to go.

Nor did Mary do anything to retain her. She too had risen to her feet. They bade each other good-bye.

But Margrete could not help saying, as she left the room: "Do you really mean to walk——?"

Mary gave a nod which implied: "Enough has been said! That is my affair!"

Margrete closed the door.

The lamps were lit in the streets when Mary left the house. It was with difficulty she could keep her feet in the gusts that blew from the south-west, strengthened by compression between the houses. She had on a waterproof cloak and hood, firmly secured, and long waterproof boots. She walked as fast as she could. One thought alone remained to her after the conversation with Margrete Røy. But it united with the wind and the rain in driving her, lashing her on—the thought of Margrete's horrified eyes and pale face when she said: "There is something the matter with you; speak to me!" Good God! Margrete understood. They would all look at her like this when they heard. Thus terribly had she disappointed and wounded those who had believed in her. She felt as if she had them all behind her, as if it were from them she was fleeing—the flock of crows! She flew on, and had reached the outskirts of the town before she knew where she was. Here, beyond the last lamp, it was pitch dark; she had to wait a little before she could see her way. But what a pace she set off at then! The gale was coming half from behind, half from the side.

The judgment passed upon her was driving her out into the wide world—no, much farther than that! It seemed to her that at the moment when she first understood her position a packet had been given her, which she had not opened until now. She had felt all the time what was in it, but it was only yesterday she had opened it. It contained a large black veil, large enough for her to conceal herself and her shame in—the veil of death. But even this was given upon a certain condition—a condition she had known about since she was a child. For as a child she had heard the story of a grand-aunt of her own, who, in the hope of concealing that she had become pregnant during her husband's absence, walked barefooted upon an ice-cold floor, secretly, night after night, in order that she might die a natural death. It would never be known that she had brought it about herself, so there would be no occasion to ask why she had done it.

But some one had heard her pacing thus night after night, and the question was asked after all.

Things should be managed better this time! The weakness to which Mary had so unexpectedly given way in Margrete's presence was quite gone. Now she had the strength to carry out her purpose.

As if it were to be put to the test at once, something shadowy appeared at her side. It rose unexpectedly out of the darkness, so alarmingly near that she set off running. To her horror she seemed to hear through the roar of the storm that she was being pursued! Then she took courage and stood still. Whatever was following her stopped too. Mary moved on; it also moved on. "This will never do," thought she. "If I am not brave enough to face this, I am not brave enough to face what comes next." She thereupon turned and went straight up to the pursuing monster, which whinnied good-naturedly. It was a young horse, seeking in its desolateness the neighbourhood of a human being. She patted it and spoke to it. It was a messenger from life —the desolate was comforting the despairing. But, as the animal continued to follow her, she took it in to the next farm. She must be alone. The people at the farm were much astonished. They could not understand any one being out in such weather, least of all a woman! Mary hurried away from the light and out into the darkness again.

The little occurrence had strengthened her. She knew now that she had courage, and walked on quickly.

She was nearing the first headland round the face of which the road was cut. It either really was the case, or it seemed to her, that the hurricane was increasing. It must surely soon have reached its worst. To her it represented her own misery and shame. This thought strengthened her. It was not death she feared, but life.

She thought it all out again as she pressed on. She would not save herself by allowing her child to be killed, nor would she send it away to strangers and thus disown it; she could not live without self-respect.

If a suitor were to come—and doubtless as many would come now as in days past—should she begin by confessing? Or should she maintain a dishonourable silence? There was only one thing she could do with honour—die with her child. She felt incapable of anything else. But no one must have any suspicions. She must die of an illness; therefore an illness must be ensured that would end in death.

This much she owed to herself; for she was as certain to-day as on the evening when she went into Jörgen's room that her action was not one for which she deserved to be disgraced.

It had been a terrible mistake, that was certain; but the fault did not lie with her. There had no

doubt been a considerable admixture of natural instinct in the feeling that prompted it; but even granting this, it was an action of which she was not ashamed. She owed it to herself to die with the undiminished sympathy of all who knew her; she also owed it to the companions who had recognised her as their leader. She had not disloyally forfeited their faith in her.

She was reaching the most exposed part of a headland now, and the struggle which began there unconsciously became to her a struggle to settle this question. It was as if all the powers of nature were trying to wrest her self-respect from her and procure her condemnation. The sea was open here, and from miles out the waves came rolling in, gathering force as they came. When they struck the cliff they leaped yards into the air. The largest of them lashed her with their highest jets. "Take that! Take that!" And the gale put forth all its strength in its endeavour to force her away from the hewn cliff. It seemed, moreover, to be trying, though her skirts were well protected by her cloak, to twist and tear them off her. "Stand naked in your shame, in your shame!"

But the raging waves did not frighten her into feeling herself guilty, nor did the gale succeed in

blowing her against the parapet, and over it into the sea. She had to walk bent; she had even to stand still when the worst gusts came; but as soon as they were over she set off again, and held steadily on her way. "I will not part with my wreath of honour; I will die with it. Therefore *you* shall not have me!"

She rounded the point, and turned inland towards the low ground between it and the next headland. There had once been a landslip here; the piece of the cliff which had fallen lay as heaps of stones below, and through these the road now passed. Amongst the crumbling blocks by the wayside stood a slender birch, quite alone. Mary remembered it as she came up to it. Had it weathered such a storm uninjured? Yes, it was safe and sound. She paused beside it to recover her breath. It bent so low that every moment she thought: Now it must break! But up it came again as fresh as ever. She herself could not stand still, with such hurricane force was the gale blowing here; but the young birch, which was so tall and had such a spreading top and such a slender, swaying stem—it stood, quite alone.

She was thinking about this as she descended towards the level ground, when the gale suddenly

lashed the rain into her face; each jet was a sharp arrow. "Ah, no!" she thought; "*this* would be what I should feel if I tried to face the storm which awaits me."

The lights from the little farmhouses, the only thing that she saw, proclaimed peace. But she knew that it was not for her.

She sped swiftly along the shore, but she was becoming tired now. One sign of this was that imagination began to take the upper hand; the reality disappeared in the semblance—in old mythical conceptions. As she toiled up and outwards to the next point, the sea was no longer sea, but hundreds upon hundreds of gaping sea monsters, roaring with desire. And raging aerial monsters with tremendous wings had promised those below to fling her out to them. With all the strength remaining to her she kept close to the rocky wall; but beneath it here there was a ditch, into which she fell and was wet through. More enemies still are abroad to-night, she thought, as she crawled out. Fortunately this headland was a narrow one; she soon reached the next stretch of level ground. Now there was only one more point to round. It was not to save her life that she was so unwilling to be blown into the sea, but to save her honour!

If she were found in the sea, or disappeared altogether, they would say that she had sought death—and would try to discover her reason for doing so.

But now she heard through the darkness the bark of the old Lapland dog. It sounded quite near. She had been walking faster than she thought; she was close to his home. There were its lights!

The mere thought of meeting a living creature that cared for her moved her. She loved life, and she no longer believed that she was so unfit to live. This familiar voice calling to her through the darkness affected her as the sight of people on shore affects those clinging to a wreck.

As she passed the farm, the dog left his sentinel's post and came to be spoken to, wagging his tail and giving friendly little barks. Mary gave his wet coat three farewell pats and hastened on. She soon heard him bark again, but it was another, angrier bark. She involuntarily thought of Jörgen—and continued to think of him all this last part of the road, which, but for him, would have been sacred to her father. How many hundred times, beginning as a little child, she had walked and cycled with her father here! Now this place too had been spoiled by Jörgen. Never

could she walk here again without *him*. Not a step further in her life could she take without him!

Involuntarily she looked heavenwards—to see nothing but clouds and thick darkness. She reached the last headland utterly exhausted, and rounded it without thinking at all, without any feeling that it was the last time, but also without fear.

Of what was before her now Mary was as certain as of the road beneath her feet, which was leading her through the Krogskogen fields to the landing-stage. It was so dark that her eyes, though by this time accustomed to the darkness, did not distinguish the white walls of the chapel until she was close to the landing-place. Her thoughts rushed to the graves in the churchyard, but deserted them again instantly in order to concentrate themselves on what she was about. She stepped on to the quay without hesitation and walked quickly along it. The gale did not threaten here, the rain no longer lashed her face; both had become subdued and friendly powers from the time she had set foot on Krogskogen soil, with its protecting ridge and islands. In other circumstances she would have felt relief and possibly peace in return to the shelter of her home—now every thought was

blunted. Quite mechanically she hurried on. Mechanically she unfastened some of the buttons of her cloak to get at the key, mechanically inserted it in the key-hole and opened the door of the bathing-house. Not until she was standing inside in the pitch-darkness did her senses awake and feel alarm. When the remnant of south-west wind which was blowing here slammed the door, she shuddered. She felt as if she were not alone.

And now she must undress and go down the steps to become ice-cold—ice-cold! Then dress again and go home to fever, and to its consequences.

If the fever did not do what she expected of it, she had what would help. She had found it amongst Mrs. Dawes's stores. The blame would be laid on the fever.

But now that the moment had come for her to begin and undress, she shrank and shivered. It was the water, the ice-cold water she was shrinking from. There would likely be ice at the edge here, and she would have to walk over it with her bare feet. No, she would keep on her stockings; she could dry them afterwards, and no one would have any suspicion. But the ice-cold water . . . what if she took cramp in it? No,

she would keep herself in motion, she would swim. But what if she cut herself on the ice in coming out? She must keep on her underclothing too. But would it be dry by to-morrow morning? Yes, if she hung it near the stove. She would lock her door, and have everything in order before the maid came. If only she were in her right mind in the morning! She had never been ill; she had no idea what would happen.

Before falling into this long train of reflections, she had unbuttoned her waterproof. Now, instead of taking off the hood, as was natural, she began, without conscious intention, to unfasten her dress at the neck, where the locket with her mother's portrait hung. Her hands shook as she did it, and her body also began to tremble. She had not thought of the locket for many years, nor was she thinking of it now; the trembling had no connection with it. But the locket became, as it were, involved in the trembling. She must take it off. If only she did not forget it! She would make sure by putting it into her pocket at once.

Oh, horror of horrors! what did she hear? Firm steps on the landing stage, coming nearer and nearer. The trembling stopped; instinctively Mary fastened, first the collar of her dress, then

her cloak—quickly, quickly. Who could have any errand here? It could not be to the bathing-house at any rate.

But it was straight there the steps came. The handle was seized, the door flew open, and the doorway was filled by a huge figure in a waterproof cloak. The hooded head was considerably higher than the door. An electric lamp threw light straight into Mary's face. She gave a wild scream as she recognised Frans Röy.

Such a feeling of faintness came over her that she was on the point of falling; but she was seized and carried out. It all happened in an instant. She heard the door banged; she was lifted and carried off. She could not say a word, nor did Frans say anything.

But before they had left the landing-stage she had come to herself again. Of this Frans was conscious; and presently he heard her say: "This is violence!" No answer. After a determined struggle to free herself, she repeated in a clearer, stronger voice: "This is violence!" No answer. But his free arm was put gently round her. She asked excitedly: "How do you come here?" Now he answered. "My sister told me." His voice embraced her as gently as his arm. But she

struggled against both. "If your sister has any affection for me at all, or if you have, leave me alone!" He walked on. "Let me go, I say! This is shameful!" She struggled so vigorously that he was obliged to change his hold; but where she was she had to remain. With tears in her voice she said: "I allow no one to decide for me." Then he answered: "You may struggle your hardest, but I will carry you home. And if you do not obey me, I shall have you placed under restraint."

The words acted like a fetter of iron. She became motionless.

"You will place me under restraint?"

"I shall, for you have lost control over yourself."

Never since she could hear at all had she heard anything so silly as this. But she would not discuss the matter with him. She merely said: "And do you imagine this will be of any use?"

"I think so. When you see that we are doing everything in our power for you, you will give in to us, because you are good."

After a short silence she said: "I cannot accept help from any one who has not entire respect for me—" and she began to cry.

Then Frans Röy stood still and peered under her hood. "You don't imagine that *I* have not entire respect for you? Do you suppose that I would be carrying you now if I had not? To me you are all that is noblest and most beautiful. That is why I am carrying you. You may have done Heaven knows what wrong deed—*I* know that if you did it, it was from the noblest of motives. You can't act otherwise! If you have been deceived, if you have made a terrible mistake—why, I love you all the better!—for then you are unhappy—that I know. And perhaps now it may be possible for me, too, to help you. No greater happiness could befall me. I will leave you, if you insist upon it. I will marry you, if you can trust yourself to me. I will kill the fellow, if *that* is your wish. I will do anything whatever for you, if you will only be happy—for that is my chief desire."

He stopped short, but began again.

"When I set off after you this evening, I was in greater misery than I had ever imagined possible. She is going to throw herself into the sea, I thought. Of course I shall go after her. In this storm it means death to us both; but there is no help for that. Nor was that what distressed me. No, it was your unhappiness,

your despair—the idea that you could believe yourself unworthy to live—you who could not act unworthily to gain life's highest prize! Never, never have I known a human being for whom I could answer as confidently. And I could not tell you this; I could not help you. I knew you; I dared not come near you. But I have been able to save you after all. For you cannot possibly wish to die now, after you have heard me?"

He had heard her sob; her arms were round his neck now, almost stifling his words. He let her slip slowly down. But she still held fast with the arm which was round his neck; and when she reached the ground she flung the other round it too, and laid her head upon his breast, sobbing—but with happiness now. He could feel the quick beat of her heart; it was the speed of joy.

The housekeeper in town had telephoned to Krogskogen that Miss Krog was walking home, in a worse storm than any one remembered, and had inquired again and again if she had arrived.

Nanna and the dog had been out on the steps several times, but the dog had never barked. Now he not only barked, but scampered off down the road.

The servants had been in the greatest anxiety. It did not seem to them at all remarkable that Mary's unhappiness and distress should have driven her out into the storm. Some such action as this hazarding of a life which she no longer valued had been an imperative necessity to her. Therefore now, when little Nanna rushed in calling: "Here she comes! here she comes!" they wept for joy. They had long had the rooms warm and hot food in readiness. Now they laid another cover, for Nanna had rushed in again to tell them that Miss Krog was not alone; she had heard a man speaking. The maids at once said to each other that Jörgen Thiis had come at last. "No," said Nanna; "it was not his voice; it was a strong man's!"

But the dog's joy at seeing Mary again was boundless. He barked, he yelped, he jumped right up to her face; there was no end to his demonstrations. When Frans Röy spoke to him, he went up to him at once, as to an old friend, but immediately returned to Mary. The little shaggy creature's ardent delight represented to her the joy of her home at seeing her again, saved. His was the greeting of both the dead and the living. This was what Mary felt. And she also felt that his happiness possibly preluded a re-awakening of her

own, when she had succeeded in shaking off the impression of the horrors she had undergone.

When she entered the house, heralded by the dog, who was as wild with joy as ever, the three maids were all in the hall to welcome her, Nanna with them. They stopped short in their exclamations when they saw the enormous figure looming behind her; for in his waterproof cloak and hood Franz Röy seemed supernaturally tall. But it was only for a moment; then they broke out: "Oh, Miss, to think that you should have been out in such a storm! We have been terribly anxious. The housekeeper in town let us know. But we had no one to send to meet you, for there is a fire in the neighbourhood and all the men have gone off there. Thank God that we have you again, safe!"

Mary concealed her emotion by hastening upstairs. Her room was warm, her lamp was lighted.

"Is all this affection and care new? Or is it just that I have never noticed it before?"

The dog whined outside until she was obliged to let him in. He was so obtrusive in his gratitude that it was with difficulty she managed to change her clothes.

When she was doing her hair she remembered

the locket with her mother's portrait. She took it from her pocket, and before fastening it on her neck again, looked at the portrait—for the first time for many years—and caressed and kissed it. Presently she lit a candle, and with it in her hand crossed the passage to her father's room. There she set it down, and going forward to his bed, bent over it and kissed the pillow. On coming out, she stopped at the door of the visitors' room. "In this room he shall sleep; then it can be opened again to-morrow; its hateful associations will be gone." A maid to whom she gave orders to light a fire told her that this had already been done, and taking Mary's candle, went in to light the lamp. Mary stood looking after her. "Have they really been like this all the time?"

The maid remained in the room, arranging it. Mary moved on towards the stairs. There she once more stopped. The dog, who had run down, came rushing up; he was determined not to lose her again. She stroked him gratefully; it was like a first little instalment of that gratitude with which her heart was full to overflowing.

"To-morrow—this evening I am too tired—to-morrow I will tell Frans Röy everything! Every single thing that has happened! Perhaps this will help me to understand it all myself."

With this brave resolve she walked downstairs, but stopped once more before she reached the foot. "Strange it is—most strange—but I feel as if I could tell the whole world!"

The dog was standing at the door of the Dutch room. He smelt Frans Röy there.

Mary followed him and opened the door. As she entered Frans exclaimed, as if he had had difficulty in keeping silence so long: "What a beautiful home!" Noticing the dog's continued attentions, he added: "And how much you are thought of in it!" His face lighted up.

"You are in uniform!" she exclaimed.

"Yes. I was at a wedding when I was sent for." He laughed.

The uniform had suggested a thought to Mary. With the dog tugging at her dress, she said, looking brightly up into Frans Röy's face: "It will not be the first time that a general of engineers has lived at Krogskogen."

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